

Backwoods



Home magazine

practical ideas for self reliant living

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Ward off cougar attacks

Easy playground toys

Make your own hotdogs

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Foraging for greens

plus

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- *two making a living articles*

My view

Confessions of a former liberal

There is an old adage that goes something like: “If you’re not a liberal when you’re in your 20s you haven’t got a heart; if you’re not a conservative by the time you’re 40 you haven’t got a brain.” It’s a reasonable summation of youth’s innocence and its desire to save the undertrodden from the seeming unfairness of the world, and of adults’ experience and its learned realization that utopia on earth is not an option.

I fit that old adage rather nicely, as do millions of others of my generation who were formerly young 1960s liberals bent on saving the world, but who are now middle-aged conservatives and libertarians bent on saving American institutions from the reckless attacks of today’s new generation of liberal youth.

I am reading a book by one of my peers, a prominent Sixties radical named David Horowitz, who was one of the founders of the New Left and an editor of *Ramparts*, the magazine that set the intellectual and revolutionary tone of the Sixties leftist movement. Horowitz’s cohorts included Black Panther leader Huey Newton and Tom Hayden, a radical who promoted guerrilla warfare in America’s cities in the Sixties but who went on to become a California state senator. The book is called Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey, and it chronicles Horowitz’s transformation from prominent left wing radical to prominent conservative publisher, revealing along the way the lies, communist front groups, and other subterfuges many Sixties radical groups used to hide their real agenda, which was to subvert America and replace it with a communist utopia.

Youth and zealotry

Much of the emphasis of Radical Son is on the involvement of youth as the soldiers who form the rank and file of the radical left. “This is the perennial challenge,” the book states, “to teach our young the conditions of being human, of managing life’s tasks in a world that is (and must remain) forever imperfect. The refusal to come to terms with this reality is at the heart of the radical impulse and accounts for its destructiveness, and thus for much of the bloody history of our age.”

Ominously, Horowitz also states in the book: “My only regret comes from thinking of all those young radicals just entering the arena who, if they were to consider this story, would benefit most from its lessons, but who unfortunately will not read it all.”

And that is the sad truth. Just as Horowitz and I did not realize our errors until we had done our damage to America,

so too most of this new generation of young radicals will not realize their error until they have done their damage. That fact is at the heart of the recruiting strategy of the left—recruit the young to do the dirty work of dismantling America, then discard them when they get older, and realize that the left is largely a fraud, nothing but a front for socialist and communist ideas.

It’s a strategy that has worked well for the left. Horowitz says that many of the publishing avenues that were open to him as a young leftist radical writer were abruptly closed to him when he became a conservative, and much of the favorable publicity he could count on from the mass media suddenly disappeared when he went conservative.

That’s why he got involved in several small political magazines, so that like the rest of us conservatives his voice would not be totally muffled by the leftist-controlled mass media. Some of his magazines are *Heterodoxy*, whose articles shed light on the fraud of many left wing government programs, *Report Card*, which exposes the fraud of government and union-controlled education in America, and the *Defender*, which is the mouthpiece of the Individual Rights Foundation. All are excellent and well researched.

Pawns and fools of the left

Horowitz also mentions the pawns and fools who do the left’s radical bidding:

Politicians, who respond to the hysterical squeals of the young, as do many of the rest of us, pass laws that further damage America’s institutions.

Feminists, who are far more concerned with leftist ideology than with the rights of women, support an Anita Hill against a conservative justice like Chief Justice Clarence Thomas, but then distance themselves from Paul Jones, because she is accusing a liberal President like Bill Clinton.

Environmentalism, he says, is just another horse for the left to ride on because all the previous ones, called collectivism, communism, and progressivism, have been shot out from under them.

Rebirth of individualism

In spite of the somber tone of the book, Horowitz sees hope for America and her institutions. His turnabout, and mine, is part of that hope. We who have been formerly liberal and influential have a lot to atone for. And who doubts that there is a reawakening of individualism in America today, even among some of our youth. Our job, as lovers of freedom and individual rights, is to keep the momentum going. Horowitz’s book and his other publications are food for thought for those of us who have travelled from left to right. The book costs \$27.50 and his magazines are by subscription. Just contact the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, of which Horowitz is president, at (310) 843-3699. Web address: www.cspc.org Δ

Keep deer out of your garden & keep the crops for yourself

By Diana W. Morgan

Last summer I returned home from vacation to find my vegetable garden devoured by Bambi. My first instinct was to run for the shotgun, but since that wasn't a legal option in July, alternatives had to be found. I did some reading on the subject of deer deterrents and found that, like the old saying about opinions, everyone had one.

In many areas of the United States deer populations are on the rise. According to Kristine Bontaites, wildlife biologist with the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department, mild winters and decreased hunting pressure are the major factors for this population boom.

"The deer herd is increasing because we (Fish & Game) let it," Bontaites says. Lobbying by anti-hunting groups produces shortened seasons. That and fewer hunters in the woods results in escalating numbers of deer. An increased development of wild land habitat has brought man in close proximity to deer.

This spells trouble for farmers, gardeners, and orchardists. Apples are a big cash crop here in the northeast, and the growers are hopping mad, demanding answers from Fish & Game biologists. Unfortunately, the one sure-fire method of keeping deer out of your crops—an electric fence—is also the most expensive.

The rise in deer predation of home and commercial gardens has triggered a booming market featuring dozens of products all touted by their manufacturers as fool-proof deterrents. What really works? Well, it depends.

I know, that's not an informative answer, but that's the problem. Nothing except a fence works all the

time. How well and how long a product works depends upon a couple of factors.

First, how hungry are the deer? With increased populations the competition for available food becomes fierce. A starving deer in early spring will eat anything. There are a few plant materi-



Small net-like bags of human hair hung in the garden effectively repel foraging deer.

als they have a problem with, and this can be to your advantage. Deer have a hard time swallowing something with fuzzy leaves. They also dislike a plant that smells spicy. This is one reason deer usually leave the strong smelling herbs alone.

However, a ravenous deer is like Charlie Chaplin in "The Gold Rush" eating his old boot. Any plant can be fair game, and in a particularly hard

year they'll try anything. The trick is to shoo them away from what you want to eat yourself.

The second factor is how finicky are the deer in your particular area? Nearly all deer repellents work at one time or another on some deer. I've had good success with several methods, some of which didn't work at all for my gardening friends. You have to keep trying and see what works for you.

A final factor is you. Most repellents work for about 4-6 weeks, but a heavy rain can ruin the efficacy of many. Deterrents require frequent application and constant monitoring to be truly useful. If you're the plant-it-and-forget-it type of gardener, you need a fence. If you've got the time and patience to mess about with repellents, they should work well for you.

Fencing

Even I have finally resorted to fencing. A fence is the one sure method of keeping deer out of a garden or orchard, but there are a few requirements. A deer can jump anything lower than six-to eight-feet high, depending on the size of the deer. No matter what material you plan on using, be sure the fence is at least seven-feet high for white tails, taller for mulies, and the bottom needs to be flush with the ground. Deer would rather go under than over, if possible.

An electric fence can be shorter. About four feet is adequate. A three-wire fence will keep the deer from stepping through it, and the bottom wire should be about 18 inches off the ground. If you want to keep smaller garden raiders out, string a fourth wire closer to the ground. The juice has to be on. This seems obvious, but Kris says she's had irate orchardists complain that the thousand dollar fence she recommended doesn't work worth a darn, only to find they've never hooked it up to any current.

Some of the cheapest and most effective fencing I've found is the

nylon mesh that is sold as bird netting. Many companies now market the same thing in larger sizes labeled as deer net. It lasts for several years if taken inside each fall, and a big advantage of the netting is that it's almost invisible. This is partly why it works. Deer don't like getting their faces tangled in it, and even though it's flimsy, so far they haven't tried to crash through ours. Deer won't jump what they can't see, so don't top this with anything either. Low shrubbery around the base will keep the deer from being able to get a running start for any fence.

Fencing with net is a much cheaper proposition than electricity. We spent about \$100 to enclose a 3000 sq. ft. garden. Shop around. Usually the bigger bolts are cheaper by the square foot than narrower ones. We got 15-foot wide stock and cut it in half. Lengths of old rebar we had lying around served as fence posts, and we attached the mesh to them with fine wire. Next year we'll replace the rebar with something more attractive, like poles cut from the woodlot, but for now it makes a good utilitarian fence that isn't too much of an eyesore.

Fencing isn't always practical for some areas. They are either too small to bother with, too large for your budget to cope with, or too irregular a



With a small bar of soap tied to the stake, the small bag of hair attached above it, and a dog, this small salad garden is well protected.

shape to make sense of. For these areas you have to resort to repellents.

During the first summer of our deer wars, we tested several repellent methods. We felt we couldn't afford fencing and tried a few alternatives before purchasing enough fencing to protect two sides of the big vegetable garden. Our best deterrent performers protected the other two sides. We will use these methods in the orchard, the rose garden, and the smaller salad garden.

Coyote urine

One of the first repellents we tried was coyote urine. Don't ask me how it's collected; I don't want to know. But it was effective for nearly all the growing season. We put rebar every six feet along the back of the garden and drizzled the urine down the entire length of each pole. Six weeks later we repeated the application. There is some scientific evidence that herbivores are nervous about feeding in areas where predators are common. Though this may not work in all parts of the country, deer here seem to be shy of the smell of critters.

Blood meal

Another inexpensive repellent is blood meal. Deer won't eat a plant if it doesn't smell like a plant. Sprinkle the blood meal over the target vegetable. This works well on plants that head up like broccoli and cauliflower. The major drawbacks to this method are a good rain can wash it off, and too much will over-fertilize the plants, since blood meal is a good source of nitrogen.

Soap

One of the very best deterrents used by many orchardists in our area is also one of the cheapest—bars of soap. Hang the bars, still in the packaging, from the limbs of the orchard fruits and deer will steer clear. I like to use



Blood meal makes plants smell like animals while the bird mesh behind it is nearly invisible when strung around the garden is nearly invisible but deters deer.

sample-sized bars filched from motels I've stayed in.

Many orchardists claim one brand to be better than another; but recent studies at the University of New Hampshire suggest that varying the brands is more effective. This doesn't give the deer a chance to get accustomed to any one smell. I leave the soaps on all winter and renew them in early spring when the feeding pressure cranks up.

One word of caution with soap: I attached several bars to stakes using rubber bands and scattered them among my roses, but eventually they all disappeared, paper and all. It was a long time before I found out where they went. For some reason, crows love soap. Tie the bars securely to whatever you want to protect. I use knitting yarn and tie the bars up like a Christmas gift, wrapped on all four sides.

Hair

My husband's aunt tipped me off to the one repellent that works the best for me. Though she lives in a suburb of Utica, NY, she was plagued with deer eating everything in sight in her yard. There's an added bonus to this method. It's free, and if you have the

right connections you can get plenty of it. You need to know a barber or hairdresser who's willing to collect the clippings for you. Human hair, or rather the oil on it, makes an excellent deer deterrent. Fill mesh bags like those that oranges and onions come in with several hands-full of hair and hang them from poles near the plants you want to protect. I even throw in shed dog hair. Two bags, one on either end of a 15-foot row of raspberries, kept the deer out of the canes all winter. The only problem I have with this method is the birds like to thief the hair to line their nests in early spring. I've used the same batch of hair for two seasons now without renewing it, and it still seems to work.

There are several commercial deterrents on the market. If you choose to employ any of them, check to make sure they can be used on crops before applying them to fruits or vegetables. Many aren't recommended for human

consumption and most are costly. I've not used any of them because the cheaper methods work just fine.

Repellents should be placed about every six feet. However, you need to shorten the gap if this isn't effective. Once again, it depends upon the deer and how voracious or finicky they are. Make sure the smell is at nose height for a deer, around three or four feet off the ground.

Whatever methods you use, be vigilant. As soon as you see any new damage from deer, either renew the repellent or change it to something else. This is the real secret of successfully keeping these cute but aggravating animals out of your garden.

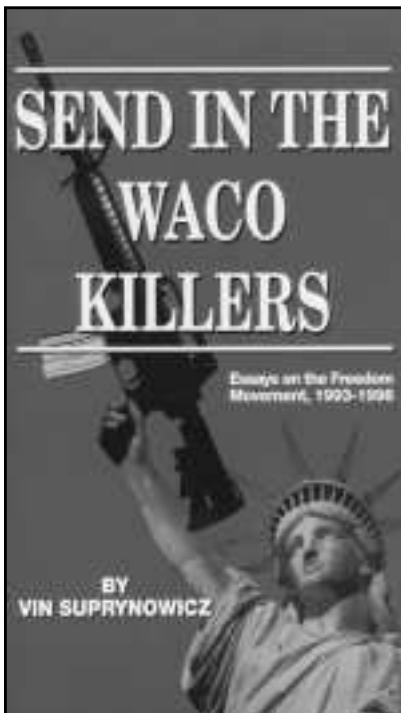
If the neighbors laugh at gift-wrapped soaps in the fruit trees and bags of hair in the beans, let them. When Bambi pays them a visit and leaves your place alone, they'll want to know what's in those funny little packages. The bottom line in the deer wars

is saving your crops for yourself. Try different methods and choose the ones that work best for you. Everything else is just a deer's dinner. Δ

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SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS



Three times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, *Send in the Waco Killers*, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

He uses factual accounts from the daily news to show how the Feds use the drug war, the public schools, jury rights, property rights, the IRS, gun control, and anti-militia hysteria to increase its power and control over us. He details how agents of the ATF and FBI have routinely lied, how they use paid informants to infiltrate Constitutionally-protected militia groups, then fabricate evidence to get arrests and discredit them.

Had he lived 225 years ago he'd have written a book to detail how King George III and Parliament have tried to enslave us but, sadly, this book is about how our government today is depriving us of our freedoms and ruining the lives of thousands without changing even one word of our Constitution.

If you read no other book this year, read *Send in the Waco Killers*. Just keep your blood pressure medication handy. 506 pages, trade paperback, \$21.95 + \$3 S&H.

Only \$24.95 (includes P&H)
1-800-835-2418

Get an early jump on weeds this spring and have a great garden all year long

By Alice Brantley Yeager

Weeds! This is an obnoxious word to gardeners, but show me a garden without weeds coming up among the good plants and I'll show you a place where nothing will grow. No matter how careful we have been the year before to eradicate every weed in sight, Mother Nature has seen fit to strew a new supply of seeds all over the place. And so it has gone ever since people have tried to cultivate gardens.

Every part of the country has its own varieties of weeds and they are fought with everything from determination and hoes to herbicides. The bad part about weeds is that they have all the persistence of buffalo gnats. The annuals produce thousands of seeds to perpetuate their kind and many of them have more than one life cycle each summer. The perennials not only produce seeds, but they sink their roots down to China and defy anyone to do them in. Biennials are thrown in for good measure just in case one of

the others fails to come through. And what about the scourge known as nut-grass or nutsedge? It's sneaky. It spreads underground by nut-like tubers and is one of the worst of the grasses to eliminate once it gets a root-hold. Chop off the grassy tops and you haven't accomplished a thing.

Here in southwest Arkansas (Zone 8) we have an abundance of weeds and, because of our long growing season, they have plenty of time to produce their seeds. Chickweed, purslane, dock, wild morning-glory, quack grass, bindweed—you name it, we've got it.

So, what's a poor gardener to do? First of all, try taking some preventative measures. Fortunately, this may begin at any season, but one of the most effective times is in early spring when cool-weather weeds are making rapid growth and can smother young plants such as lettuce, radishes, spinach, etc. Even with good soil preparation before seeds are planted, one can still expect hidden weeds to germinate right along with the desired seedlings.

One method of control in the early garden is to lightly cultivate soil around young vegetable plants to inhibit the



Indian Strawberry is a creeper that grows all year long in the South and can take over a garden. It is easily distinguished from cultivated strawberry plants by its yellow blossoms which are followed by tasteless, almost round-shaped "strawberries."

growth of weeds. If you start soon enough, chances are many of the weed seedlings will die from having their roots disturbed and exposed to air. If you're into raised bed gardening, a small hand trowel and fork will probably suffice as gardening tools. A dandelion weeder is perfect for cutting deep rooted perennials - thistles, plaintains, dock, etc. This weeder can also be used to harvest asparagus.

If you are planting in long rows, however, a good sharp hoe or potato digger will give quicker results than small hand tools. Be careful not to cultivate too deeply or too close to vegetable plants in your desire to kill out the weeds, as you may disturb the roots of the crop plants too. If weeds are crowding vegetables, better play it safe and gently hand-pull the weeds.

Some folks say that one of the best times to get rid of weeds is just after a heavy rain as they can be pulled up easily. This is bad advice. Never attempt weeding when soil is wet as you'll probably do more harm than good. Weeding in wet soil is akin to



Weeds are on their way to smothering onions. Here they are coming up through an organic mulch of leaves and pine needles, so they are easy to uproot.



The Jerusalem Artichoke's flowers are long-lasting in bouquets, but the plant's growth habit is invasive and it has a tendency, because of its height, to shade out desired plants. It does have a redeeming feature—its tubers are edible and may be enjoyed raw or cooked.

trying to cultivate when dirt is wet and will create cloddy conditions. Also, there are a number of diseases (for instance, bean canker) that can be spread by working among plants while they are wet from rain or dew.

Don't be fooled if your freshly tilled soil looks pliable enough to allow you to proceed with planting. If there were any perennial weeds or grasses growing there the year before, don't overlook the possibility that some roots may lie hidden ready to send up shoots as soon as you turn your back. Thoroughly rake the plot and discard any lingering plant parts or roots. Perennials, once they get a root-hold, are hard to discourage. The infamous nutgrass can ruin a garden spot within a few seasons if not eradicated quickly. Years ago we inadvertently brought in a few nutlets along with some young grape vines and it took a diligent pig (confined by an electric fence) and a lot of patience to finally rid the garden of the persistent nutgrass. Even today we occasionally find sprigs of the menace. These are carefully dug out and cast into the

soil.

Not all weeds are bad

In all fairness I must point out that not all weeds are bad guys. Some of them have culinary value and some are useful in flower bouquets. If you have a sizeable quantity of lamb's quarters show up, don't throw all of it into a compost bin. Try cooking some of the young plants (6-8 inches high). Simply wash them in cool water, discard any tough stems and cook them a few minutes in just enough water to cover. Drain, season with a bit of oleo or butter, and serve for a delicious side dish that is rich in Vitamins A and C. The flavor resembles a combination of spinach and asparagus. Mature plants will tower above everything else in the

incinerator. Nutgrass is not compost material.

If at all possible, get rid of weeds before they produce their crops of seeds. If you wait until they reseed themselves, you're in big trouble when next planting season rolls around. Weeds do have a useful purpose if gathered before seeding, as they may be added to the compost heap where they will increase the humus content. The same idea applies when weeds are turned under or dug into the

garden and produce thousands of tiny seeds.

Goldenrod, the scapegoat of the hay fever season, is undesirable in a vegetable garden, but its flowers are a boon to beekeepers in late summer. Wild onions are a taste treat chopped into sour cream to spread on baked potatoes. Wild garlic flavors an Irish stew to perfection. Regardless of their good points, all of these plants are aggressive and will take over if not held in check.

A good gardening rule is to be intolerant of any weeds in and around the area where vegetables are to be grown. Not only do weeds vie for soil nutrients and moisture, thus cutting down on vegetable yields, but they can be hosts for plant diseases as well as hiding places for insects that multiply and attack the garden. A good example of insect pests is the flea beetle that thrive and multiplies in patches of weeds and moves in on the garden in early summer. Flea beetles love eggplants and almost every other vegetable plant. An infestation of flea beetles chewing tiny holes in leaves can not only lead to inferior produce from weakened plants, but it can also promote the spread of bacterial and viral diseases among plants.



Wild Ageratum's sky-blue flowers are beautiful additions to bouquets, but watch out for its take-over tactics in the garden.

Preventing recurrences

Once a garden is under control as far as weeds are concerned, one of the most effective ways to prevent recurrence of a weedy situation is to adopt a mulch method that works for your own garden. Remember that weeds, like other plants, need sunlight and their seedlings thrive when there's plenty of light. Many gardeners resort to black plastic in order to shut off the light supply. However, plastic may end up being a moisture barrier and it is not biodegradable. In many parts of the country, plastic is likely to make the soil too warm. Frankly, who wants to look at black plastic?



Ragweed, sometimes called Hayfever Weed, is not limited to a single type of weed. It has lots of cousins and they produce myriads of seeds.

Fortunately, many birds love the oil-rich seeds so we gardeners don't inherit all of them.

I much prefer a thick organic mulch of leaves, straw, pine needles, etc. This not only cuts off the light supply to weed seedlings, but the mulch breaks down to put nutrients into the

soil and make it loose and workable. Rain runs through an organic mulch without washing soil away from the roots of the crop plants. If any weeds come up through the mulch, they are easy to extract as their roots are in loose soil.

There are many other materials that can be used as mulch—newspapers, bark chips, seaweed, corn-cobs, and so on. Some are more available as local products making them expensive in other areas. All have their good and bad points. Before using anything with which you are not familiar, check about for advice. Some materials may withhold water from the soil. Some may attract ants or termites. Others, like paper, may be unattractive and have a tendency to scatter during windy days.

Tools

Easy-to-use tools are a must where weeding is concerned. Garden supply stores and catalogs have all kinds to offer. Avoid the very cheaply priced tools, as they are not likely to last more than a season or two. Most tools are versatile and have more than one use. The important thing to learn is what works best for you. For instance, some tools are heavy to handle and, while they may last for generations, they tire the gardener. A lighter weight tool will often suffice. The old muscle-building grub hoe is a good example of a heavy tool seldom seen in use today.

When hand-weeding, don't do the job in a stooping position that makes you think you have something in common with Methuselah when you stand up. If knee guards are comfortable for you, wear them. If a low stool or bucket provides comfort as a seat, use it. One of the nicest inventions on the market is the combination kneeler and



When the sweet scent of Japanese Honeysuckle floats upon the air, it's a treat for the olfactory sense. But, when it invades the garden, it is a real headache.

seat. It can be quickly converted from a sitting height to a kneeling position just by inverting it. Get one with a steel frame, as you will enjoy this item for years to come.

Weed control took a big leap forward with the introduction of the string-trimmers. These power tools come in several sizes and weights and should be considered with an emphasis on ease of handling. Women can use the lighter weight ones without difficulty and they come in electric or gasoline powered models. We have a Weed Eater that is invaluable in keeping down weeds between our raised beds in the garden, and we have recently purchased a Troy-Bilt Trimmer-Mower to use in other areas where we have trouble with tough vines such as honeysuckle, poison-ivy, wisteria, etc. These advances in weed control are worth their weight in gold to gardeners and landscapers.

One last piece of advice—don't overestimate your ability when it comes to planning the size of your garden. Taking care of a manageable area is one thing, but trying to keep one end of a garden weeded and in good shape while the other end is producing a crop of next year's gremlins is another. Have fun with your garden. Don't make it a place of drudgery. Δ

Dog-gone it, I never sausage a wiener of a recipe

By Richard Blunt

Gastronomically, the United States is one of the most fortunate countries in the world. A full spectrum of climate conditions allows every possible kind of food to be produced. Taking full advantage of this wealth of plenty, countless recipes for preparing these foods have been provided by Native Americans and immigrants from all over the world. It is interesting to note that the descendants of these native people and immigrants have developed a talent for breaking tradition. They have adapted and modified many of these traditional culinary formulas into foods that are uniquely American. The hot dog, a form of sausage, is a classic example of this culinary creativity.

The sausage is not strictly a European invention. The early colonists arrived in the New World and found Native Americans making pemmican, a smoked dried sausage patty made from a mixture of game meat and fat that often had berries added. Over the years immigrants from all over the world have brought other sausage recipes from their native land to America. Today, there are over 2000 meat processors in America producing approximately 5 billion pounds of 200 varieties of sausage.

The hot dog is the most popular of these sausages. It sports many names, depending on what part of the country you're in: tube steak, Coney Island turkey, white hot, red hot, and frankfurter are a just few of the most popular names that come to mind. By whatever name it is called, the hot dog has had a glorious career in this country for over 135 years. And before the sudden rise in popularity of the hamburger, fried chicken, and other fast foods, it was probably the most popular food item in the world.

Unfortunately, over the years, the packaged food industry has removed much of the original texture, snap, and juiciness from the hot dog. Commercial processors are stuffing them into synthetic casings or removing the skins before packaging. Sinful! For a real good hot dog, one that has a real crunch when you bite into it, a natural skin or casing is absolutely necessary. Also, some contemporary hot dog varieties are being made with everything from chicken to seaweed, ingredients that have indescribable textures when made into sausage. Despite all this, Americans still eat over 20 billion hot dogs a year.

There is no clear path to the origin of the American hot dog, but an open debate still rages over whether the American hot dog was adapted from the German frankfurter, the Austrian wiener, or a variety of other sausages that share a common heritage. A few years ago, *Yankee Magazine* published an article on the best hot dogs in New



Richard Blunt

England. The deluge of angry letters from incensed readers, each of whom complained how a particular "best hot dog" in the world was unjustifiably ignored, revealed how deep the passion for this unique food runs in this country.

I was 12-years old before I tasted my first commercial hot dog, because my mother was not a great fan of the commercial product. "They don't taste like a real sausage," was her usual complaint. When she made her homemade baked beans on selected Saturdays, she would go to Mr. Cibley's butcher shop and buy his custom made kosher-style all-beef franks. These delicious hot dogs bore little resemblance to their highly preserved commercial counterparts, the most significant differences being that they were grey instead of pink and had a dense rather than a spongy gelatinous texture. Mr. Cibley was one of our neighbors and a good friend of my mother's. He knew my mom had a passion for the taste of pork and the bite of hot chilli pepper, so he taught her how to make an all-beef kosher frank as well as a kosher-style frank that contained a little pork, pork fat, milk, and chilli pepper flakes, none of which, save for the chilli pepper, have a place in a kosher kitchen.

Today I live in an area where small neighborhood butchers are rare, but not impossible to find. Unfortunately, none of them make a custom kosher-style hot dog, and Nathan's Coney Island beef hot dogs, considered by many to be the best commercial kosher-style hot dog in the East, are sold only in supermarket deli cases, at prices rivaling that of prime beef.

But I am a very lucky soul. This past summer, while attempting to sort the hundreds of recipes that my mother left me, I came across Mr. Cibley's kosher-style hot dog recipe. My first impulse was to share this old fashioned homemade sausage recipe with my family. So I planned a



special cookout at which I served homemade hot dogs on fresh baked rolls, smothered with homemade mustard, pepper relish, and sautéed onions. The resident food committee—Sarah, Jason, and Michael (my three children)—gave this effort a unanimous thumbs up. That is all the motivation I needed to share these formulas with you.

After a short review of some basic sausage-making procedures, I will present you with three recipes that will make your next cookout an experience you will want to repeat often.

Hot dog making 101

Hot dogs are simply raw ground or chopped meat mixtures that are seasoned and stuffed into casings. It doesn't require a lot of specialized equipment or knowledge to make a first rate hot dog. After making your first batch, using the formula that I am sharing with you in this column, you will be able to develop your own formula to suit your personal taste and texture preferences.

Casings

The best hot dog mixtures are stuffed into natural casings, which are simply hog or beef intestines cleaned and packed in salt or brine. Most butcher shops and a growing number of supermarkets make their own sausages and will sell you hog or beef casings, packed in brine, at a very reasonable price. These casings are sold in lengths of 30 to 100 feet, but can be kept under refrigeration for several months. I prefer pork casings, because when stuffed they yield a hot dog of 1- to 1½-inches wide, which requires less cooking time than the 3-inch dogs that you get when using beef casings.

To prepare the casing for use, first cut off the amount that you are going to need. I estimate about 10 to 12 inches for each 6-inch stuffed hot dog. This allows room for accidents, such as a weak section of the casing that may tear while stuffing. I cut about a 5-foot length of casing for every 6 hot

dogs. You may be more dexterous than I and able to make the same number of sausages with less casing. If so, go for it.

Soak the casing in cold water for 30 minutes, then rinse in cold water by gently slipping the end of the casing over the faucet. This rinsing will also reveal any holes in the casing. Gently drag the casing between your fingers to remove any excess water.

To stuff the casings, I use an inexpensive wide-mouth funnel. I set the funnel on my work surface with the narrow end facing up. I gently open one end of the casing and slide it over the upward-facing end of the funnel. Holding the casing with the thumb and first finger of one hand, so that it stands straight out from the tip of the funnel for about five inches, I gently slide the casing onto the funnel tube with the other hand, until only two inches of the casing is left extended from the funnel neck.

Stuffing

The important rule to remember while stuffing any sausage is to avoid air pockets. To get started, I pack my funnel as tightly as possible with hot dog filling. As I am stuffing the hot dogs, I keep the end of the funnel poked into the filling that is in the casing. If air still gets into the casing, and it starts to balloon, poke the casing with a pin and gently let the air out. Stuff the casing with about one inch of filling, then twist the casing in the middle of that filling. Tie a string, using a double knot at that twisted point. Remove the half inch of filling at the end and reuse it. Continue filling the casing, tying each hot dog off at the end when it reaches six inches.

The filling

There are important tools and ingredients to consider. First: although I have both a handcrank meat grinder and a commercial grade electric mixer with a meat grinding attachment, I have discovered that my food processor does the best job when I am making most sausage mixtures. To control the texture of the filling, I simply use the "pulse" feature that is standard on all food processors. This method has no equal when making the smooth mixture that is required for hot dogs.

Second: when making any sausage, use only good quality meat. That is, boneless cuts, free of sinew and cartilage. For hot dogs I use 80% beef to 20% fat ground chuck and boneless pork loin. The butcher at the supermarket of your local butcher shop will be happy to sell, or even give, you good quality pork fat or beef suet.

Using the simple principles outlined here, along with a little practice gained by working with my mom's recipe, you will open the door to an endless variety of hot dog flavors and textures. Let's get started.

Cibley's kosher-style hot dog

As I mentioned earlier, this is not a kosher hot dog because it contains a small portion of pork, pork fat, and milk for additional flavor. You can simply substitute veal for the pork, beef suet for the pork fat, and a light beef stock for the milk and you will have a true all-beef, kosher-style hot dog.

Ingredients:

½ cup onion, diced medium
¼ pound beef suet
¼ pound pork fat
1½ pounds 80%-20% ground chuck or other quality ground beef
3 cloves fresh garlic, minced
2 tsp. dry mustard
2½ tsp. ground coriander
1 tsp. mace
1 Tbsp. kosher salt
¼ tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. light corn syrup
¼ tsp. dried chilli pepper flakes
¼ tsp. sweet paprika
½ cup whole milk or light beef stock

Method:

1. Process the onion, pork fat, and beef suet with the steel blade of the processor until smooth. Add the ground chuck and continue to process until smooth again.
 2. In a separate mixing bowl, blend together the remaining ingredients then pour the mixture into a measuring cup.
 3. Pour this mixture into the processor while it is running and process until the mixture is well blended.
 4. Stuff the mixture into prepared casings. Tie off the dogs at 6-inch lengths.
 5. Prick each hot dog with a pin 5 to 6 times, especially where you've discovered air pockets. Roll them between your palms and a smooth work surface to remove all trapped air.
 6. Poach them for 15 minutes, as you would eggs, in a suitable size pan, weighing them down with something to prevent them from floating. Five minutes into the poaching, prick them again with a needle. This will prevent them from splitting.
 7. Place the poached dogs in a colander and rinse them with cold water, then pat them dry and let them cool.
- These dogs will keep up to a week under refrigeration, and at least two weeks when packaged properly and frozen. They can be reheated using the same methods that you would for any commercial hot dog. Remember, these dogs do not contain any preservatives, so unlike their commercial counterparts they are grey instead of chemical pink.

The hot dog bun

As a sandwich, the hot dog must be viewed in its totality. It is the sum of four parts: the meat, the bun, the mustard, and the relish. And for many of us, there is a fifth part—onions. Over the years, experience has taught me that it is far easier to find a good hot dog than it is to buy good hot dog rolls. But it is possible to bake good rolls yourself.

A good hot dog roll is similar to a good peasant bread, having few ingredients and served fresh from the oven. If you, like me, have been turned off by the doughy, overly sweet sponges that commercial bakeries call hot dog rolls, try these. You will not be disappointed.

Ingredients:

5 cups all purpose flour
1 Tbsp. kosher salt
2 packages active dry yeast
2 cups warm water, 110 to 115 degrees F.
1 Tbsp. light corn syrup
2 Tbsp. peanut oil
1 egg, beaten with 1 tsp. of milk

Method:

1. Combine four cups of the flour with the salt in a suitable size bowl and set the mixture aside.
2. Combine the yeast with the warm water, corn syrup, and the peanut oil. Set the mixture aside for 10 to 15 minutes while the yeast proofs.
3. In a large bowl or mixer, stir the yeast mixture into 2½ cups of the flour mixture until a smooth batter is formed. Add the remaining 1½ cups of flour mixture ½-cup at a time, continuing to stir until the resulting dough pulls away from the side of the bowl and forms a sticky ball in the center. If necessary add some of the remaining cup of flour.
4. Turn the dough onto a work surface coated with flour from the remaining measured cup of flour. Knead the dough, adding flour as necessary, until it becomes smooth and elastic with no lumps. This will take about 15 minutes.
5. Place the dough into a lightly oiled bowl with straight sides. Cover it with a damp towel or plastic wrap, and let it rise until double in bulk, about 40 to 45 minutes.
6. Punch down the dough and cut it into 18 pieces. While keeping the others covered, roll each piece into a 1½-inch rope. Pat each rope into a 3- by 6-inch rectangle. Evenly space 6 rectangles on three 11- by 16-inch nonstick cookie sheets. Let them rise, covered with damp paper towels, for 45 minutes.
7. Pre-heat your oven to 375 degrees, and place pan half filled with boiling water on the bottom of the oven.
8. Brush the rolls with the egg-milk wash and bake them for 15 minutes. Immediately remove the pan of water from the oven and continue baking the rolls for another 2 minutes. The finished rolls should be a medium golden brown.

Immediately remove the rolls from the pan and place them on wire racks to cool.

Old fashioned hot dog pepper relish

The third component of a great hot dog is the relish it is served with. A good relish can raise the acceptability of even a second rate commercial hot dog and make it edible. Not great, but edible. Here is a relish similar to those created hundreds of years ago to preserve vegetables over the long winter in many parts of the world. American culinary wizardry has transformed this relish into a perfect complement to its two favorite foods—hot dogs and hamburgers. I also use it to add zip to one of my favorite picnic foods, cold Southern Fried Chicken.

Ingredients:

3 cups seeded and coarsely chopped bell peppers (use a mixture of yellow, green, and red)
4 cups coarsely chopped white onions (about 5 medium onions)
1 cup finely chopped green cabbage
Boiling water to cover
½ cup 5-percent white vinegar
½ cup water
1½ cups 5-percent cider vinegar
1 tsp. peeled, minced fresh ginger
4 cloves minced fresh garlic
4 seeded jalapaño peppers, minced (the hottest you can find)
1½ cups sugar
1 Tbsp. kosher salt
2 Tbsp. mustard seeds
2 Tbsp. celery seeds
1 tsp. whole allspice
1 tsp. dried chilli pepper flakes

Method:

1. Place the chopped bell peppers, onions, and cabbage in a large stainless steel or heat-resistant glass bowl and add enough hot water to cover. Let the mixture stand for 15 minutes then drain and return to the bowl.

2. Combine the ½ cup of white vinegar with the ½ cup of water. Heat the mixture to boiling and pour over the drained vegetables. Let the mixture stand for 15 minutes and drain again.

3. Place the drained vegetables in a stainless steel pot, large enough to hold all of the ingredients, then add the remaining ingredients and bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook for 30 seconds, then remove the mixture from the heat.

4. Pour the mixture into clean, hot, 1-pint canning jars and process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes to seal the jars.

Let the relish mellow for one month in a cool dark place before serving.

Once opened, store the tightly closed jar in the refrigerator.

Ball park mustard

Another key component of a good hot dog is the mustard. I like to mix my mustard with the relish before slathering it on the hot dog. The mixture resembles an Indian Moghul condiment called achaar that is usually served with curries. In this country, we call this kind of mix Chow Chow. I make several types of mustard, all based on a very simple formula. By re-configuring the basic ingredients, I can create mustards with very different flavors. I think that this mustard, when used with a good pepper relish, is a crowning glory for hot dogs. Give it a try, and let me know what you think.

Ingredients:

¾ cup yellow mustard seeds
¼ cup brown mustard seeds
4 Tbsp. water
½ cup honey
⅔ cup cider vinegar
⅔ cup flat, dark ale or beer
¼ tsp. chilli pepper flakes
1 Tbsp. horseradish
1 Tbsp. fresh ground nutmeg
1 Tbsp. kosher salt

Method:

1. Grind the mustard seeds to a desired consistency in a blender.

2. Mix the processed seeds with the water in a glass or stainless steel bowl and let the mixture stand covered for one hour.

3. Combine the mustard mixture, honey, vinegar, flat ale, chilli pepper flakes, horseradish, nutmeg, and salt in the blender or food processor. Process until the mixture forms a consistency you like. Add more honey if the mixture looks dry.

4. Transfer the mixture to a glass or stainless steel bowl, cover and let stand for 24 hours.

5. Pour into sterilized 4-ounce jelly jars and process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. Store in a cool dark place for 3 weeks. Refrigerate after opening.

This will yield about 2½ cups.

Well, that's all for now. I am sure that once you experience what a real hot dog tastes like, you'll find that those gelatinous pink things that the meat companies call hot dogs are best left in the supermarket meat case. Δ

Make your kids some terrific & inexpensive playground toys

By Rev. Dr. J. D. Hooker

My wife and I have sent two daughters out into the world and still have two more at home, and by the time you read this, our third grandchild will have been

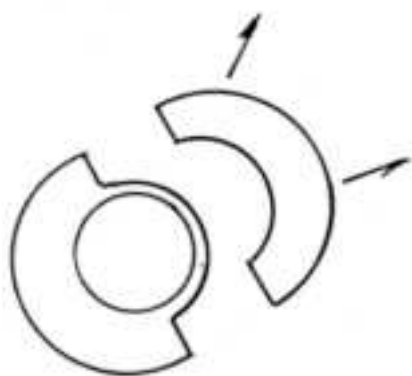


Figure 1. Cut and remove waste.

born. Through all of this (including my own recollections of when I was just a little guy myself) the single biggest thing I've learned about kids in my whole life is that no matter what other requirements a kid might have—food, shelter, doctor and dentist visits,



Figure 2. Turn tire inside out and hang in place.

shoes and clothes, to learn about responsibility, to get an education, or whatever—every kid needs good healthy exercise that's plenty of fun.

It really doesn't make any difference whether you might be raising city kids or country kids; whether those kids are white, black, Hispanic, or whatever; their number one need is simply having fun in a safe environment.

Childhood is when everything is fresh and new each and every time the sun comes back up. Frogs can live in pants pockets, dogs and cats can reason just as well as humans (and some can talk), bits of a skyblue shell from

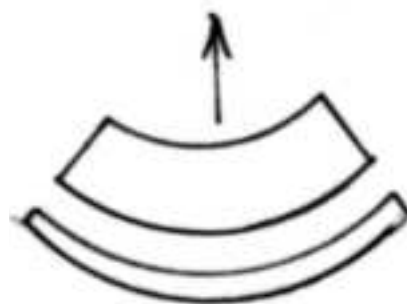


Figure 3. Cut off and remove sidewalls from waste piece of tire.

a newly hatched robin's egg are worth many times more than diamonds, Mom and Dad are still the smartest people on earth, and just playing is life's highest priority.

But childhood's also a very short time. All too soon, those tiny little loveable and laughing tykes will be marching off to universities, dying on battlefields, sweating in factories and on construction crews, and running off to mortgages, bills, and adulthood. We can't control their destinies, nor can we protect them from all of life's pains and tragedies, but we sure can build them some memories, that

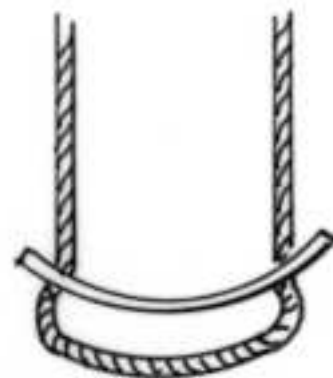


Figure 4. Drill two large holes, add rope as shown, and hang in place.

they'll always look back on with big childlike smiles.

You really don't need to spend a tall stack of green paper. If you're handy at all, there are so very many varieties of really fun and safe play equipment, which are so easily put together, that there isn't really any reason why every kid shouldn't have some swing, see-saw, sand box, or something that they love playing with.

If you've got no more than a piece of rope, a sharp knife, and an old bald junk tire—and make sure it's really bald because the tread can give kids nasty oinches—then you've found a couple of really nice swings already. Most smaller children especially love the larger swing illustrated here because the built-in hand-holds let them feel more secure (Figures 1 and

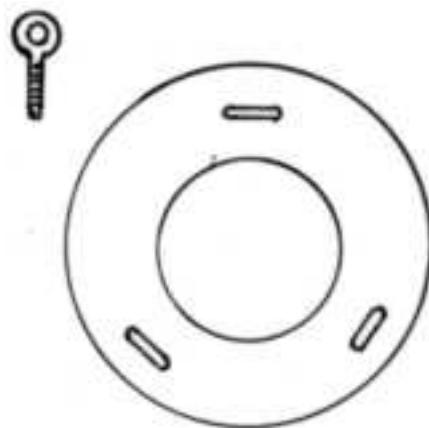


Figure 5. Install three equally spaced eye bolts.



Figure 6. Hang in place.

2). While kids who are just a little older usually prefer the smaller swing formed from the “scrap” piece (Figures 3 and 4).

With three or four eyebolts and an equal number of large flat washers, a whole uncut junk tire can readily be hung up as shown (Figures 5 and 6),



Figure 7. Cut notches in board.

quickly providing a swing that’s plenty of fun when a couple of kids decide on sharing the ride. While only a handsaw, a scrap of 2x8 or 2x10 about

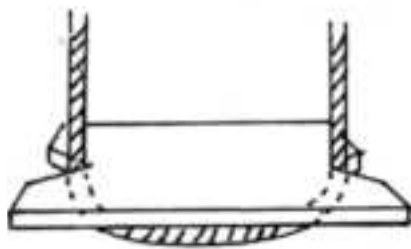


Figure 8. Hang in place.

a foot long, and a length of rope can be used to make a simple, but sturdy swing in well under five minutes, that will provide years of childhood pleasure (Figures 7, 8, and 9).

Probably the most uniquely ingenious sort of swing that I’ve ever seen though has to be the sapling type swing, which was widely popular in colonial America, and is still common in some remoter parts of West



Figure 9. Alternately, holes can be bored, rather than cutting notches. Hang in the same manner.

Virginia, Tennessee, and a few of our other eastern mountain areas.

Not at all difficult to fashion (the hardest part being boiling and bending the hoops at the top), it requires no purchased parts. The only thing I’ve ever found wrong with this design has

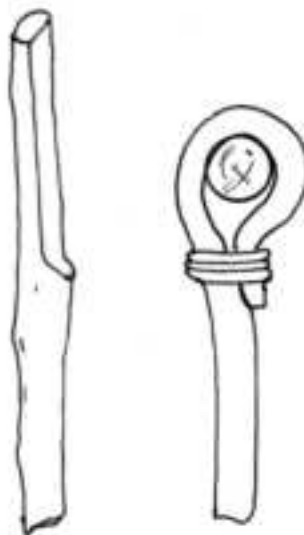


Figure 10. Trim the upper end of a sapling pole and boil until easily bent. Wrap around the hanger and bind in place.



Figure 11. Lash poles in place for seat, back, and braces.

been that it’s not more widely known (Figures 10 and 11).

Not everyone, though, has a “just right” tree, with a stout and sturdy horizontal limb, at just the right alti-

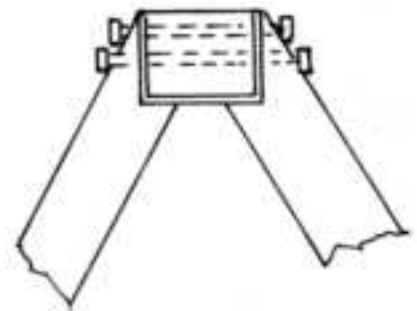


Figure 12. Trim 4x4s, or similarly-sized wood, and bolt solidly in place.

tude, available for hanging a swing from. But that isn’t much of a problem either, if you’ll use a little of your “backwoods” ingenuity. I used landscape timbers for legs, and a 4x4 for the crosspiece, with some 2x4s for bracing to build our kids’ swing-set because that’s what I had available. But I’ve seen a variety of other materials used with equally excellent results: used power poles—often available free or at least cheap from utility companies; smaller diameter (4- 8-inch) logs straight from the woodlot; all different sizes and grades of standard lumber; and so forth (Figures 12, 13, 14, and 15).

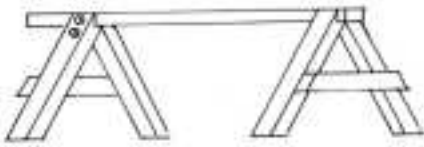


Figure 13. Add bracing and prepare to hang swings.

Monkey bars, and a wide range of other climbing and swinging along types of play equipment, are well loved by most kids of all differing



Figure 14. When hanging swings from metal eyebolts, using eyes designed for splices in cable allows rope to hold up much longer.

ages. Most of these are readily put together using the same sorts of lumber. Just use an electric drill, or a brace and bit, for the holes, and heavy weight metal conduit, iron gas pipe, or

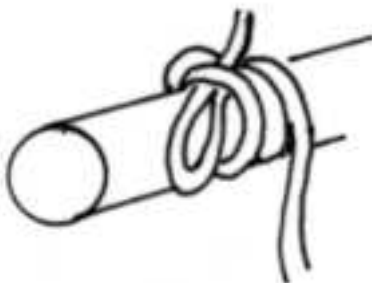


Figure 15. Alternately, wrapping rope two or three times around a wooden pole will also help the rope to last.

pieces of heavy duty chain link style top rail for the bars (Figures 16 and 17).

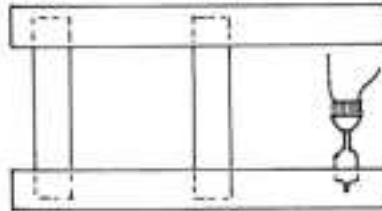


Figure 16. Drilling the holes that will receive the bars

Sandboxes can be made from most anything—railroad ties are terrific, as are old tractor tires, logs, and pieces of phone poles. If you happened to have any sort of lumber around that hasn't

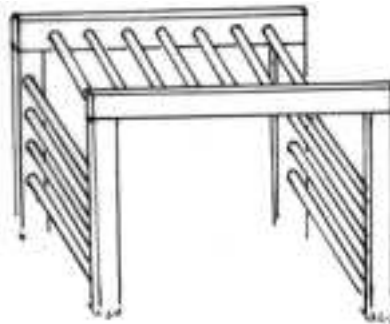


Figure 17. The finished monkey bars

already been assigned to some specific project, I'm sure you could find it easy enough to design and knock together some simple sides to contain a small pile of coarse mason's sand (Figure 18).

With any sandbox though, if you or any neighbors have any cats, the big thing is to provide some sort of cover for it when the kids aren't

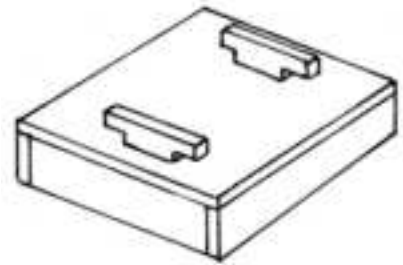


Figure 18. Make a cover for the box.

playing in it. Otherwise, what you've built is a giant litter box.

Our daughters' very favorite piece of play equipment has always been their teeter-totter. I don't think I put more than a couple of hours into building it, and hardly any money at all. Now, some 20 years later (I told you childhood flies by fast), our eldest daughter's own kids are getting just as much fun out of it as she did.

All I used to build it were 10-foot long 2x10 scaffold planks, two 18-inch pieces of 2x10 lumber, an empty wooden whiskey barrel, and twelve lag bolts with washers. That sure isn't much material to use when putting something together you'll be able to watch your children's children play on (Figure 19).

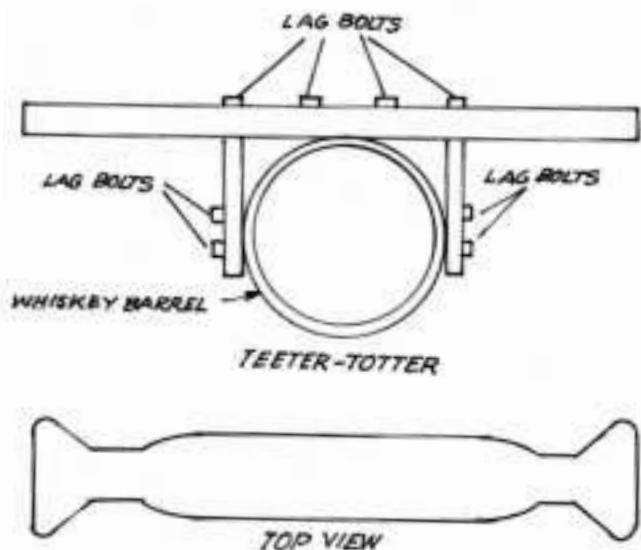


Figure 19. Putting the teeter-totter together



Figure 20. Line a hole with cloth, apply heavy coats of paint, fill with water, then add a bunch of kids.

I'm sure we've all seen those cheap (cheap-made, not cheap-to-purchase!) plastic wading pools for kids. While



Figure 21. A wooden box may be lined with heavily painted cloth and used as a wading pool. Allow the cloth to overlap over the edges. Tack or staple in place before painting.

almost all children will get a whole summer's worth of enjoyment from one of these, that's just about all I've ever seen one of these plastic pools hold up to. Try keeping one over winter, and it's almost invariably cracked and leaking some place come spring-time.

But if you've already read my article on canvas roofing in issue Issue No. 39 (May/June 1996) of *Backwoods Home Magazine*, you'll know that simple painted cloth can be just as waterproof as anything. It's really not much trouble at all to shovel out a saucer-like depression (Figure 20), or nail together a pool-sized wooden frame-work if there's any reason for not digging in your yard (Figure 21). Lined with canvas, old bed sheets, or similar large pieces of cloth, and given a few heavy coats of outdoor paint or varnish, such an easily parent-built wading pool can provide one kid or a whole passel of children with plenty

of summer fun for years at next to no cost.

So why not take some of these ideas and add in a few of your own, along with a small investment of your time. I know most people are pretty busy and there are plenty of "important" things that we all should be busy doing. But before any of us realize what's happened, those college enrollment forms, draft board notices, job applications, and all of those other "entering adulthood" notices will be arriving. So let's put in the effort to nail together some memories our kids can always smile back on, while we still have time. All of the less important work really can wait until tomorrow. Δ

Baiting the Hook

*I pop the point
of the tiny trout hook
through the neck
of a ten cent Montana nightcrawler*

it curves through the worm

*I jab the tip
out
just below the
dark red neck band*

*I double the stretched worm
into a half-bow
hook him again
gather another loop
and hook*

bow pushed against bow

*until the worm begins
to tie himself
onto the gold hook*

*threading in and out of his own
kinks*

**Sheryl L. Nelms
Ft. Worth, TX**

Pep Talk

Rise and shine, coleus! What do you say?
Good morning, geranium. Have a nice day!
Hi there, aspidistra, your soil could be wetter.
You have a dead leaf right...there. Isn't that better?
Gloxinia, baby, you seem to be dying.
Could it be that deep down in your roots you're not trying?
Hello, little prayer plant. Say one for me.
Care for some bonemeal? How about tea?
I talk and I cultivate, chatter and nourish.
My plants seem to love it; they flower and flourish.
They know if they don't that I'll do something drastic:
Replace them with sturdy, unwilttable plastic!

**Jean Adair
Melrose, MN**

Mountain lions — attacks are still rare, but just in case . . .

By Gene Sheley

Near the top of North America's wildlife food chain is the mountain lion, a close second to bears in various forms in ferocity, strength, and killing ability. In recent years, the wild felines, also known variously as panthers, pumas, cougars, cat-mounts (cat of the mountains), and big cat, increasingly have become entangled with every animal's worst enemy—man.

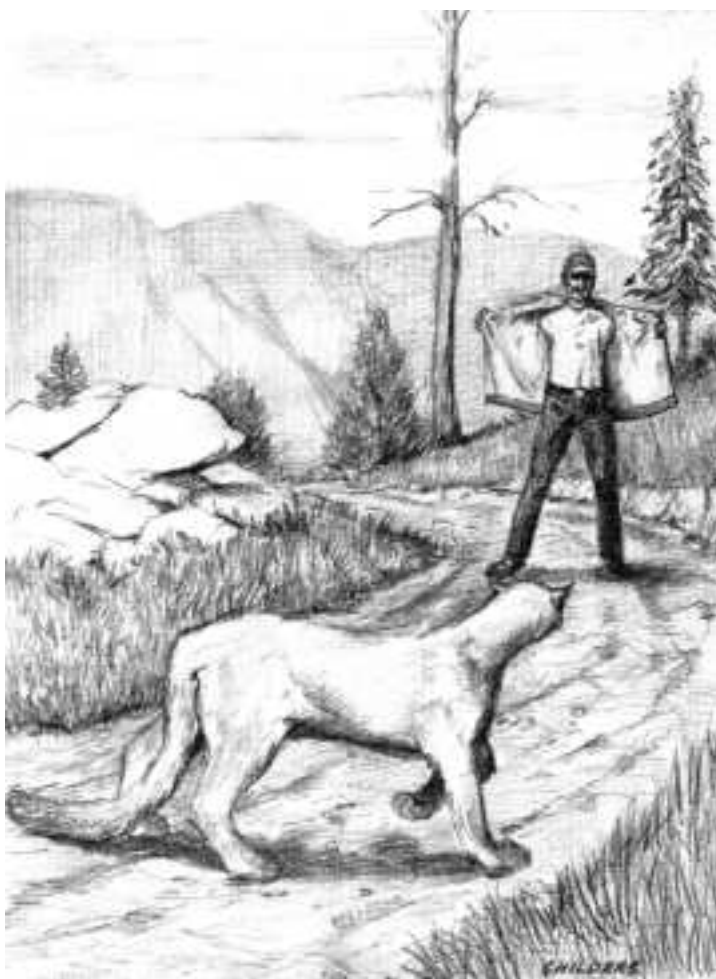
Human populations relentlessly encroach on the lions' domains while laws protecting them or regulating their depredation have increased the lion population as well.

Fortunately, tragic lion/human encounters still are rare but of the 50 recorded attacks in the past 100 years, most of the attacks have occurred in the most recent 20 years.

The rare events hardly are sufficient to generate any sort of public panic but the statistics do reflect an exponential rise in such encounters that, with current laws and human sprawl, has no chance of abating.

The cats are widespread throughout the United States, and in some cases the populations are calculated at all-time highs. Montana, as a typical mountain lion habitat state, is about half mountains (hence the corrupted Spanish name for "Mountain") and the remainder hilly uneven plains.

The western third of the state, the entire southern tier, and isolated mountain ranges in the central part of the state, are all considered mountain lion habitat. The huge Fort Peck reservoir periphery in the northeast quad-



Anything that makes you look bigger, including opening your jacket up wide, may confuse a lion enough to deter an attack.

rant of the state also is major cat territory.

The big felines traditionally have restricted their areas to the good cover such forests provide, but as the human and cat populations vie for similar traditional habitat, the cougars are likely

to be found in less traditional locations. Their presence in plains and valleys may be only transient but also may be the result of human-provided food such as livestock and pets. The chance of meeting, or worse, tangling, with a mountain lion is unlikely, being slimmest in a state like Montana, which is nearly the size of California but with only a fraction of the people California supports. However, lion/human encounters aren't limited to the sparsely populated areas.

Certainly an individual living in the cat's natural habitat runs a stronger risk of puma problems than one in a big city. However, a recent scare in a Los Angeles suburb indicates that the animals are either desperate for sustenance or may be losing some of their fear of humans.

Both California and the Big Sky Country, as well as other states, have issued informational brochures on living with the cats.

California long has been blessed or cursed with a growing human population. The growth is the result of the state's voters' preference for a full protection and preservation policy that assures not only the cat's survival but that its continued numbers increase.

Montana's recent growth is a microcosm of California, as the big border state undergoes some rapid development and population increases. Both states' wildlife agencies are concerned about the potential for more reported lion-man clashes.

While California treats the mountain lion as an endangered species, subject to control only in the most unusual and threatening situations, Montana treats the lions as a game animal sub-

ject to hunting in a regulated season. But this is a far less open policy than the bounty system once in place in Montana—and in California as well.

Both policies tend to enhance the big cat's population figures. A female may first breed from eighteen months to two years of age, bearing from one to five kits. These youngsters stay with the mother until another litter is produced about two years later.

As lions live in the wild an average of 12 years, the statistical production of one female may range from six to thirty additions to the lion population during the course of her life.

Naturally, there is a loss to bears and accidents, while automobiles take a toll of lion life on the highways. In spite of some contrary information, lions are not characteristically subject to disease and do not spread disease.

Captive lions can live as long as 25 years, according to the California Department of Fish & Game, and they estimate that California's lion population grew from 2,400 in 1972 to more than 6,000 in 1989, the last cat census year, and the state admits the lion population probably has grown since then.

With the knowledge that the big cats probably will continue to thrive and increase in numbers, those who run the risk of encounters should be aware of some life-saving or at least risk-reducing facts about the cats.

Information about lion attack survival has been compiled and developed into a group of lion encounter hints. It should be noted that no agency is attempting to discourage visits or permanent residency in lion territory. Most undeveloped areas, particularly the mountains, are inherently dangerous to humans. Without proper caution that danger can manifest itself.

Snakes, insects, falling rock, disorientation, rushing water, and all the other natural characteristics of the wild and semi-wild can be hazardous for those who venture into them. Even such organized activities as skiing can

be fatal, as a couple of recent celebrity deaths show.

Coupled with the restricted access to help and medical aid, the wilds regularly take a human toll. Mountain lions, while part of the perils, probably are among the last things about which a backwoods denizen must be concerned. More people have died on the slopes of northern California's Mt. Shasta in hiking and other activities in the past two years than have been

Hiking wisdom

Two hikers, crossing a mountain pasture, were suddenly confronted by a mountain lion.

"That mountain lion looks hungry," the first hiker said. "I think he's going to attack."

The second hiker immediately removed his backpack and took out a pair of track shoes, which he started to put on.

"What are you doing?" the first asked. "Those aren't going to help you outrun a mountain lion."

"I don't have to outrun the lion," the second hiker said. "I just have to outrun you."

killed by cats throughout the entire state in its recorded history.

The operating word in a lion encounter is "unpredictability." The animal may intimidate, run, or attack but no particular cat action should be assumed.

The paramount protective element in an unavoidable lion encounter is man's characteristic upright stance. Cats consider almost anything on four legs as fair game, but the vision of an unnaturally erect animal results in some confusion on the part of the beast.

A child, however, with a small stature may appear as a small animal to a lion. During the last 20 years, 70 percent of the cat attacks were perpe-

trated on children and in recent years, that figure has climbed to 90 percent.

If a child is present in a lion encounter, the child should be picked up by an adult, although the adult should bend at the knees in the lifting effort to maintain the erect position. The lion may associate a crouching or squatting human as natural prey.

It's also important to enhance the upright position by appearing as large as possible. Spreading the arms and standing on tip-toe are protective maneuvers which can be exaggerated by a spread coat.

A calm, soothing voice directed at the cat may create more confusion or even fear in the lion.

If conflict is unavoidable, the primary recommendation is the strong admonition to "Fight Back! Never run!"

In the absence of more positive protection, such as a firearm, a number of natural tools such as a large stick or rocks may add a measure of protection. However, obtaining these "weapons" from the ground should be accomplished without bending over and as quickly as possible.

Both states report instances in which rocks and sticks, even fishing rods and fists, have prevented serious injury or death in lion conflicts.

Only a bear or a larger lion will intimidate a puma. A dog is of no protective value, in the traditional sense, against a big cat.

The dog's presence may be a problem or an advantage, depending on the fickle cat's aggressive decision, in that the dog could attract a lion to human habitat as potential, and ultimately real, food. At the same time, the dog also could be a sacrificial diversion away from the human.

The wildlife agencies emphasize avoiding any effort to run from a lion. That can trigger an instinct to chase prey, regardless of the number of panicky legs that prey uses, and this is an animal that can run down a deer or elk. Escape by running is impossible.

In all cases, one should constantly face the animal. Retreating, without turning one's back, will not necessarily indicate an element of human fear and will give the lion reassurance that it isn't going to be cornered. A lack of escape access for a lion almost assuredly will precipitate an attack.

A covered carcass of a deer, elk, or obvious lion prey means the lion intends to return later to eat on a kill. It's the lion's nature to protect its food source, and approaching or staying in the area of this food stands a good chance of a headlong clash with a lion.

Females are likely to be with cubs and the youngsters may stay with the mother as long as two years. Another litter may be on the way soon after the juveniles are weaned. As any other mother, they will protect the cubs with aggressive behavior of the most serious level.

Avoiding the cats is the primary safety measure. While it remains the best option, it is a declining one as the habitat line between cats and man increasingly narrows.

The mountain lion's ideal habitat is abundant cover and adequate food, notably deer and related animals. That also describes the habitat of many who read this magazine, but those self-sufficient individuals don't have a corner on the lion encounter market.

Even those in all but the inner city are increasingly encountering the animals.

It should be remembered that the animals are solitary, with the exception of juvenile or subadult litter mates and their mother.

Each lion tends to claim from 50 to 150 square miles of personal territory. Consequently, if one adult cat is seen or encountered, it isn't likely a second adult or subadult will be anywhere near.

The presence of deer almost without exception means lion territory. It is unlikely one will run across a special lion territory marker, consisting of piled up dirt and forest litter spiked

with urine or dung. These are called "scrapes" and all lions respect these territorial claim markers. To a human, it is positive indication that a lion is somewhere in the area and the human likewise should respect the territory and at least be aware of a potential encounter.

The most likely lion encounter will involve one, and infrequently two, juveniles or subadults who have been weaned from the mother. These young lions have no personal territory initially and are seeking unclaimed ground. They are the most hungry for food and are more likely to take a chance in checking out human habitat.

Nearly all the recent semi-urban sightings have involved young weaners. The litter mates will not stay together long as the lion adults unite only for breeding. These young animals, although smaller than the adults, should be avoided the same as large adults.

A veterinarian once told this writer, "A determined house cat can rip you to shreds and there's no way you can retaliate in time to prevent serious injury."

It's safe to assume that if a 10-pound tabby can do major damage, a 50-pound "cub" mathematically can do five times the harm.

A full-grown 100-pound female lion can take down a 400-pound elk, said Montana officials. For deer, the usual killing method is biting just below the skull at the back of the neck. But the lion often may kill an elk by pulling back the head and breaking the neck, which demonstrates the physical power of the lion.

"The mountain lion is inseparably tied to deer and elk as prey species," said the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. But even in the absence of deer family members, there is no assurance that cougars are equally absent. The Montana agency points out that the cats also prey on small rodents and birds, and even the well-protected porcupine is fair game for a lion.

It must be emphasized again that the chance of sighting a lion is remote and a real confrontation is even less likely to occur.

Lion encounters are probably as rare as jet liner crashes, but, they rate major news coverage. However, unlike the high-flying tragedies which one would hope diminishes, lion/human encounters are almost certain to increase.

Under California's lion preservation agreement, the state was supposed to encumber \$30 million a year for 30 years as lion haibat land purchase. The idea was to reestablished state-owned habitat to prevent any human development in the prescribed areas. So far only a fraction of the funding has been spent for lion land and what has been purchased is less land than one lion naturally requires.

No one should be afraid of the woods, whether traveling or living in that environment, for any reason, and least of all because of cougars.

Avoiding cougars is simply a matter of reasonable caution and common sense while following the guidelines provided by the wildlife agencies. The flip side of the lion issue is seeing one from a safe distance or position. Some people have spent much of their lives in the wilds without ever seeing a mountain lion. From a safe vantage point, the viewer is blessed with one of the most beautiful sights the animal kingdom can offer. Δ

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Home Magazine*
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Plant fruit trees, pick big bucks

By Robert L. Williams

Among the items you never wondered about are how many apples are grown and consumed in the world today. The answer is about 500 million bushels. That, folks, is half a billion bushels.

The United States and France combine to produce 100 million bushels. In this country, which is the leading apple-growing area you are likely ever to see, there are more than 7,000 varieties that have appeared.

Today, the most popular varieties are Red and Yellow Delicious, Stayman, Rome, Fuji, Braeburn, Jonagold, Jonathans, Limbertwig, McIntosh, Winesap, Virginia Beauty, Gala, Blushing Gold, Crispin, Granny Smiths, and others.

Ask a dozen people to name their favorite variety and you are likely to get a dozen answers.

Ask a grower what his favorites are, and he'll tell you in an instant: whatever is selling best at the time.

The same is true of peaches. Everybody has his own favorite and all are delicious and, sooner or later in the season, in great demand.

Fruit, in case you have not noticed, is Big Business.

And you can get in on it by starting your own orchard at home and growing and selling your own fruit.

Look at the economics of it all: a bushel of peaches may sell for \$12 per bushel (and, depending on the weather, you can expect the prices to rise somewhat or significantly). Apples sell for, let's say \$8 per bushel. Prices are impossible to predict because of the immense number of variables, and the figures given here are to be considered only as guidelines. If prices rise or drop, other prices will follow, generally, so the buying power of the dollar remains about the same.

Making money

The number one question connected with growing and selling fruit is bound to be this: Can I make money if I become a small grower, and if so, how much money can I make?

It's a simple matter of multiplication.

Start with peaches. If you have good weather and if your trees are healthy, you can pick about four bushels of peaches from each tree. If you can sell peaches for \$12 per bushel, then you can realize an income of \$48 from each full-grown healthy tree. If you have a half-acre plot of land, you can plant about 80 to 85 trees on the space.

Ready for the early math? With 80 trees yielding four bushels each, and with peaches selling for \$12 per bushel, you can expect an income of \$3,840 from half an acre of trees. If you have a full acre orchard, you can double the amount. In fact, the rule of thumb is 165 trees per acre.

That amounts to almost \$8,000 per acre.

Apples do even better. You can pick 10 bushels of apples from a healthy and mature tree, and at \$12 per bushel you can realize an income of \$120 per tree. If you have 165 trees on an acre of land, you can pick, in a good season, 1,650 bushels of apples and sell them at \$12 per bushel for a total yield of almost \$20,000 an acre.

This isn't all profit, naturally. You must pay for the root stock or the young trees, and then you must fertilize, spray, protect the trees from rabbits and deer, and then pick apples. If you have a larger number of trees, you will need to hire someone to help with the picking, which cuts into the profits.

But after all is said and done, you can enjoy a healthy income from several acres of peaches and apples. To make an ever nicer arrangement, add a few cherry trees, some nectarines, maybe a few apricots, and pears. All of these fruits are relatively easy to grow and are in demand on the market.

Look at some particulars on apples.

If you plant Galas, you can start to harvest them during the first week in



Figure 1. When apples or other fruit trees are young, wrap protection around the slender trunks. In this photo, Robert Williams III is using regular aluminum foil as rabbit deterrent.

August, and other varieties will ripen during the remainder of the summer and fall. By planting several varieties, you will not have all of your apples ripening at the same time each year. If this does happen, you must harvest the apples all at the same time, which means grueling work for several days, and when these are marketed, you may find that there is a glut and you lose part of your crop.

But if you have a range of varieties, you will have apples ripening at various stages, which means that you can sell fresh apples right through Thanksgiving and Christmas.

You can buy your own small trees and set them out, or you can, with many varieties, buy root stock and graft your own apple trees. If you set out the thin, limber trees commonly called whips, you will have apples, at least a few of them, in the second full year of growth.

Some experts strongly suggest that you pull off the apples so the tree can use all its energy for growing a stronger trunk and better root system. We have always been too soft-hearted to destroy the young apples, and our trees seem to have endured the rigors without problems.

When the trees are young and fragile, you need to wrap the slender trunks up to a height of 18 inches or so. We use plain old aluminum foil. This prevents rabbits from gnawing the trees and often killing them.

For planting, I recommend digging a hole deep enough that when you set the tree roots inside the ground level comes to within two inches of the graft mark near the roots. Do not set the trees deep enough that the graft is underground.

I like to pour at least a gallon of water into the hole and then mix loose soil into a thick soupy consistency.

Then spread the roots of the tree and sink them. Then cover the wet soil and roots and pack the earth firmly. It is also good to use a stake to keep the trees from being blown over while they are still young and weak. I use a stake four or five feet high and I tied the trunk of the trees to the stake by using thick or heavy cord.

Until fairly recently, peaches came and went all at once. Now, thanks to new varieties, you can start picking peaches in June and continue until late August or even into September. The Fair Time peaches do not ripen until early autumn, which means a much longer growing season for peaches gen-

erally, and this also means a longer income season as well.

If you want to grow cherries, you will find that there are really few problems. Birds love the bright red fruit, and you will have to compete with them. But the trees are hardy, they grow fast, and they are resistant to many pests and diseases.

I should not admit this, but we found a cherry tree growing in a vacant field in the country. We dug up the tree, which was only three feet high, and set it out on our property. The tree grew quickly and produced cherries in the second year.

Then we noticed sprouts growing all around the first tree, and we dug up the sprouts and set them out. They grew well and flourished and were bearing cherries quickly.

More and more sprouts appeared, and we soon had a small cherry orchard from that one tree. The quality of the cherries is superb, and we could sell or give away cherry trees every spring and still have plenty to spare.

But growing fruit is one thing and selling it is quite another. If you want to realize the maximum income from your fruit, the easiest and best method of marketing is to set up your roadside stand and sell directly to the customers. If you do not own property on the roadside near a good traffic flow, ask the owners if you can rent a corner of land where you can put up a wood frame market from which to sell your fruit.

If you succeed in this direction, a small and neat fruit stand can be built for a small amount of money and effort. Your major need is for shade from the summer sun and protection against storms, so you do not need to be elaborate in your choice of structures.

If worst comes to worst, you can always sell from the back of your pickup truck. We know one man who owns a truck with a camper top, and each day, six days a week, he parks in a vacant lot beside a busy road. For advertising he sets two or three boxes



Figure 2. Use stakes to stabilize the tender trees. Tie the tree trunk to the stake to prevent or lessen wind damage.

of fruit out where they are clearly visible. Everyone who sees the truck knows that the fruit is for sale: he isn't just letting it have fresh air.

Motorists stop and buy dozens of boxes of apples. In a given day he can easily sell two dozen boxes, and on good days he sells far more. And he doesn't spend the entire day there. He wants to catch the going-home traffic

When selling apples, your best bet is to sell small amounts if possible. That is, sell apples and peaches and pears by the bag rather than by the bushel. A peck bag of apples sells for as high as \$4 to \$5, which means that a bushel will sell for \$16 to \$20. A peck of peaches sells for \$7 to \$8, which means that for each bushel you sell in peck form you receive \$28 to \$32. In both cases your income is far greater when you sell by the peck rather than by the bushel.

You can also sell to roadside markets, to supermarkets, and to small grocery stores. Run an ad in the paper

to see what kind of response is generated.

Try the pick-your-own approach. Sell a bushel of apples for \$9 if the customer brings his own container and picks his own fruit. The major problem here is that sometimes there is waste as customers break limbs in order to reach high fruit or climb trees and damage the limbs. Some customers shake the trees, and any fruit that hits the ground is likely to be bruised and ruined.

Another source of income is through cider. If your budget will permit, buy a cider press and squeeze your own



Figure 3. When the trees are larger, inspect buds for insect or weather damage. Use a dormant spray before the buds open to keep worm infestation down and another spray before mature apples are formed.

A country moment



*Springtime pollinating
(Frank Tickle photo)*

juice from fruit that is of not high enough quality to sell at the market outlets. This is a superb way to use bruised and insect-damaged fruit, but be sure to cut out all bad spots in the fruit before you press it into cider.

You also have the expense of buying plastic jugs, but you can buy the jugs and press the fruit and still make money by selling the cider at \$3 per gallon.

Whatever your choices, there is money to be made, and you will find that most customers appreciate the bargains they receive. Occasionally one will complain about your charging twenty-five cents for a single apple (which is a wonderful way to make even more money—one-at-a-time selling—but the income is slow. But whenever someone complains, remind him that a candy bar costs two or three times as much as the apple, and the apple is a heck of a lot better for him than the candy is. Δ

Newcomers and old-timers

By T. L. Couch

It happened to be in town the other day, having failed once again to talk my wife into cutting my hair for me. As I pretty much always wear a hat anyway, I figure there can't be much harm done. But my wife reasons that just as sure as she gives me a haircut, something will come up that I will have to attend to where my hat just isn't appropriate. I can't imagine such a situation. But as I haven't yet worked myself up to cutting it myself, I went on into town to have it cut professionally. Course there's a lot to be said for a professional haircut, besides the truth that you don't have to hide it under a hat if you don't want to. The thing that I like the most though is that you get to listen, while other folks talk.

My wife dropped me off at the barber shop and, being the gem that she is, she went on to run all the errands that had to be run while we were in town. The haircut went well and I was pleased with the results, as always. It was a busy morning at the barber shop, so I paid up and stepped out onto the sidewalk to await my wife's return. It was one of those late spring mornings with just a touch of cool still in the air; when all of nature is alive and glad of it; when the long cold winter is just a fading memory, and the heat of summer not yet arrived.

I stood for a moment taking in the morning; stretching my back as is proper custom after a haircut, and noticed a couple of elderly gentlemen sitting on the bench outside the barber shop. They had apparently stopped talking when I came out, and were now both looking at me. We nodded our greetings, and I ambled over to park myself on the remaining portion

of the bench. We sat in silence watching the world turn around us.

The barber shop sits about three doors back from the intersection that boasts the only stop light in town, and while we sat there contemplating our navels the light turned red. Cars and pick-up trucks began to line up before the light, and finally one of the old gents could contain himself no more.



With an upward nod of his head toward the street he spat the word out as if it had the taste of castor oil and might have the same effect, "Newcomers."

"Yee-ah" said the other reaching up to scratch his whiskery chin, "More and more of 'em all the time."

"You mark my words," growled the first, "This whole place is goin' ta hell in a han basket." And with that he raised the paper cup he was holding and spit into it for punctuation.

The second old gent gravely nodded his head as if already mourning the loss.

The first old timer, a small man now shrunk with age but still carrying the remnants of the spunk and vitality of his youth, straightened himself up on the bench and glanced my way before looking toward his friend, "I was born here, ya know. Lived here all my life. Never wanted to live anywheres else."

The second gent now straightened himself and his voice rose slightly as if he had been challenged, "I know that Charlie", he said. "I was born here too. Hell, we've known each other for more 'n seventy years."

The first old gent glanced my way again as he settled back against the bench, and I understood that this last exchange had been for my benefit. Not having been born here myself, and being just a youngster, I also understood that anything I might have to say would be about as welcome as a puppy's fart.

Silence fell again as the first old timer, Charlie, raised his cup once more. He spat, and then nestled the cup between his legs. He cleared his throat and spoke softly, "Ya know, my Pa used to say that the best thing that could happen to this valley would be for all the ore to play out, and all the 'rushers' to go on to the next strike, and then close the gates after 'em and not let anybody else in. And he was right too.

That's what we shoulda' done 'bout fifty years ago when the ore was all played out."

Nodding his agreement, and once again in mourning, the second old gent said, "Hell, even twenty years ago woulda' saved it."

"Yep," agreed Charlie.

The second old timer, catching the mood now, began, "My Pa used to say the only trouble with living in the prettiest place in the world was that everybody else wanted to live there too."

"Yee-ah," said Charlie, "when my Great Grandma and Grandpa first

came here from back East this whole valley weren't nothin' but wild Indians and wild game. There weren't but a handful of white folks, but when they saw this valley they knew that this was as far West as they needed to go." He raised his cup, spit, and put it back in its place.

"Yep," said the second old timer, "I remember the stories my Grandpa used to tell me 'bout when he first came to this valley," he said.

"What do you mean when your Grandpa first came?" demanded Charlie.

"Well, just what I said. When my Grandpa first came here!" retorted the second old gent, sounding a bit defensive.

"I thought your family came here the same time mine did!" exclaimed Charlie.

"Well, they did, pretty close!" proclaimed the second old timer. "Your Great Grandparents came here an' not long after that your Grandpa was born. My Grandpa was about the same age as yours, and he came here on his own when he was just a boy. You know all that," he said with a wave of his hand.

"If I did know it I forgot it!" exclaimed Charlie, "More likely you never told that 'cause you ain't nothin' but a dern newcomer yourself. Bartholomew." And with that, Charlie got up from the bench and stalked away.

The second old gent, clearly upset, watched his friend walk away. As Charlie turned the corner and disappeared Bart turned to me. He looked at me for a second as if lost, and then he pushed himself up off of the bench, pulled himself up straight, squared his shoulders, looked me right in the eye and announced, "Well, at least I was born here!" Then he turned on his heel and marched off.

I watched Bart walk to the corner, turn and disappear just as Charlie had done. I couldn't help but grin, and wonder what my Indian ancestors would think of these two newcomers.
Δ

Make your own coffin nails with this easy-to-use gadget

By Gene Sheley

Backwoods Home Magazine doesn't necessarily advocate the use of tobacco products but the reality is that millions of folks, including some readers of the magazine, are smokers hit by the current high prices of cigarettes.

Central Tobacco Manufacturing of Quebec, Canada and its U.S. subsidiary has introduced its "Premier Supermatic" cigarette making system for those who want to replace the \$2-plus per pack "ready-mades" with homemade cigarettes at a fraction of the commercial price.

The core of the system is the supermatic, a technically advanced and sophisticated device that packs tobacco into pre-formed filter tip and plain end cigarette tubes.

Some 30 mechanical parts are essential to making the supermatic work, and individual parts are available in the event of materials and workmanship problems. The "roll your own" gadget, however, is covered under a guarantee.

In spite of its mechanical nature, the supermatic is simple to use. Once a cigarette tube has been placed in the "nozzle," and the tobacco of one's choice is placed in a receiving tray,

the user simply pulls a level and a "perfect" cigarette is the result.

The tobacco can be packed to any reasonable density, but the manufacturer recommends a loose pack technique until the user becomes familiar with the nature of the device.

Fresh tobacco can gum up the maker so drying the product first is important. A factory-applied Teflon coating on the cutter and nozzle will prevent this gum-up potential, but ultimately this wears off. After enough use to wear off the coating, the user should be familiar with the appropriate use of the system.

Nearly a dozen users of the device live in the area in which this magazine is produced, and they report that bulk tobacco of various types and grades may be obtained for as little as \$7 per pound, which reportedly is enough to make six to seven cartons of cigarettes.

The cigarette tubes are available from the supermatic manufacturer. Cost of the machine is about \$40. A carton of 200 tubes costs \$2.75.

In the U.S., the device and the tubes may be purchased from C.T.C., P.O. Box 1111, Plattsburgh NY, 12901. The Canadian source's address is 10220 Armand Lavergne St., Montreal, Quebec H1H 3N5. Δ



Build inexpensive sheds in an afternoon

By Jan Palmer

Looking for a small shelter for sheep, goats or feeder pigs? A place for the dogs to lie out of the wind and snow (or sun)? Maybe a place to store lawn mowers, tillers and such out of the rain? Or even better, something that could be used for all of the above in one easy highly adaptable design?

Adaptable because the basic frame is four by eight feet and yet can be made out of a variety of materials. I used 2x4 lumber, pallets and "seconds" of sheet metal. Other options are plywood or logs and there are any number of other items. The shed I built is semi-portable, sitting on the ground rather than being secured. It has withstood rainstorms, 60+ mile per hour windstorms, and freezing weather. But it could have been made with corner posts sunk into the ground for permanence.

I started by making the back wall, using an eight-foot long 2x4 on the bottom, three 3½-foot uprights (set the center one exactly on center) and a 10-foot long top piece. The front part of the frame is the same except for using four foot uprights. These should look like the photograph in Figure 1.

For structural bracing I connected the frames with four-foot 2x4 pieces placed at the top and bottom of both



Figure 1. The basic frame for the front and back of the shed is in the foreground. The back is three and a half feet tall, while the front is four feet. This allows for water runoff.

ends and the center. For the roof, take one additional 2x4 and nail for the center of the roof.

Next, nail two pieces of 10-foot scrap or second sheet metal (the extra length allows for an overhang). I attached this to the center and end pallets which fit right into the space. An end pallet is shown in the photograph in Figure 2.

The other end, which faces the wind, and the back are covered with metal sheets which are nailed into place. In cold areas metal can be used on both ends, while in warmer climates pallets



Figure 2. A pallet is used for the end of the shed and there is another in the middle which divides the shed into two individual stalls. Metal sheeting is used for the roof, the back, and the end of the shed that faces the wind.

can be used on all the sides for air circulation with a metal or plywood roof for shade or protection from rain.

The front, too, is adaptable. To secure an individual animal in for kidding or lambing, use a piece of hog panel or another pallet, both of which are shown in Figure 3. Or for several animals, or for more room, arrange individual runs in front of each pen or a community pen for all animals to enter whichever 'stall' she chooses.

These can also be built on concrete, compacted gravel or any number of other floored surfaces, as well as on



Figure 3. Goats situated in their individual stalls

bare ground. Whatever the floor, be sure it is well drained.

These sheds have been used to shelter not only sheep, goats, dogs and equipment, but also pullets, bottle calves and other small livestock.

This is a project that can be done quickly and can be a family project. It is also easily adapted to other lengths and widths.

Versatility, ease of construction, and reasonable cost with a flexible materials list make this a good first backwoods project. Δ

The Flood

Just before my divorce was final
I dreamt of rain:
It filled the backyard
Then started coming into the
house—
Under the sliding backdoor,
Under the wall behind the TV set,
Swirling around,
Submerging the carpet and
Floating anything on the floor
shoes papers books,
Getting deeper
Until it lifted the furniture
I was terrified and helpless to
stop it.
But I knew it was not a danger to
our lives.
It was just destroying the house.

John Silveira
Ojai, CA

Make a Shaker two-drawer case

By Dana Martin Batory

This small two drawer case is derived from a Shaker piece built in circa 1850 and on display at the Fruitlands Museum, Harvard, Massachusetts. The original cabinet would have held anything from sewing supplies to silverware. My sturdy cabinet not only houses a selection of my favorite video tapes but supports the TV and VCR as well.

My case was built from salvaged rock maple flooring which came from a United States Post Office re-modeling. The tongues and grooves were carefully preserved and used as glue joints.

Cutting List:

- 1 top 30-inches long, 12-inches wide, ½-inch thick
- 1 bottom 30-inches long, 12-inches wide, ½-inch thick
- 2 sides 6-inches long, 12-inches wide, ½-inch thick
- 1 divider 5½-inches high, 12-inches wide, ½-inches thick
- 2 drawer fronts 14¼-inches long, 5-inches wide, ½-thick
- 2 drawer backs 14¼-inches long, 5-inches wide, ½-inches thick
- 4 drawer sides 11½-inches long, 5-inches wide, ½-inch thick
- 2 drawer bottoms 13⅝-inch long, 11⅜-inch wide, ⅜-inch thick
- 2 1½-inch diameter white porcelain knobs

Construction

Cut top, bottom, and sides of case to length and width. Layout location of joints.

The cabinet top, bottom, and sides are joined using the common box joint. The ½-inch deep, ½-inch wide joints could be cut using a router and a template or the well know homemade



Figure 1. Cutting subsequent box joints in top panel

jig which fastens onto a table saw's miter gauge. I used the latter.

First, securely attach an auxiliary wooden fence to the miter gauge about 25-inches long and 4-inches high. Position it so that about 6 inches projects past the miter gauge on the right. Use a dado head exactly ½-inch wide (the width of the fingers and grooves) and set for a ½-inch depth of cut. Then cut a dado in the fence. Unfasten the fence, shift it to the left, secure again, and cut another dado making sure there is ½-inch of wood between them. Fasten a wooden block ½-inch wide, ½-inch thick, and about 1½-inches long in the slot on the far right. Return the fence to its original position. The small block acts like a guide pin.

Take the top and one side piece and hold them against the miter gauge. One piece should be offset ½-inch. Cutting both at once in this position



Figure 2. Parts making up the two-drawer chest

will yield a perfect joint. After each cut simply shift both to the right so they fit over the guide pin. The pieces can also be cut one at a time. Note: adjust the dado blade to correct depth by making several test cuts in some ½-inch thick scrap lumber, then cut joints.

Layout location of ¼-inch deep ½-inch wide dado for divider. This could also be cut using a router. I found it easier to cut it using the dado blade and the table saw's rip fence. To make



Figure 3. Parts making up drawer

sure the divider was on center I adjusted the dado blade to cut slightly less than ½-inch wide. I then made two passes changing the top and bottom end for end.

Assemble case to test fit. While temporarily clamped together custom fit the divider.

Because glue will not adhere to varnished surfaces nor varnish to glued surfaces, I always apply one coat of varnish to all parts before gluing, taking care to leave glue surfaces bare. Apply one coat to hidden surfaces.

Glue and clamp case together. After glue has set, sand joints flush where required. Apply two more coats of varnish.



Figure 4. The completed rock maple two-drawer chest

Drawer construction

Drawer dimensions are relative. Check openings before cutting.

Saw fronts, backs, and sides to length and width. Layout and cut $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep dadoes in fronts and backs. Layout and cut $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch deep, $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch wide rabbets $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch up from bottoms of fronts, backs, and sides for the drawer bottom. Cut bottoms to fit.

Prepare drawer pieces as above before gluing. Do not glue bottoms in place, they must be free to float. After applying final coat of varnish center and attach knobs. Such knobs are historically accurate. The Shakers themselves used such store bought hardware. Δ

Country Moment



Swallows court in spring.
(Frank Tickle photo)

Grow unusual plants on your windowsill

By L. Gordon Stetser, Jr.

Between groceries and garbage, there's a fabulous indoor garden—for free. By saving seeds, roots, stems and pits you'd otherwise throw away, you can grow lush trees, exotic vines, and ornamental plants to brighten bare corners and window sills all through the house. Almost anything that lands on your kitchen counter has potential, as long as it's fresh—not processed, canned or packaged.

Here are some tips for those that are the easiest to cultivate, but it's hard to go wrong if you choose plants that are native to warm climates. And, if it doesn't grow—what have you lost?

Avocado: Use toothpicks to suspend pit flat side down over a glass. Add water until the base of the pit is immersed. Keep in a warm, dimly lit spot. Have patience—the pit will crack eventually and a root will emerge, followed by a stem shooting upward. To encourage branching, cut the stem halfway down when it's about eight inches high. When the stem is about a foot high, plant the pit, root, stem, and pit, in earth and set it in bright sunlight.

Ginger: With toothpicks, suspend a two-inch piece of ginger root horizontally across the top of a glass. Fill with water until bottom third of root is submerged. When the roots are one-inch long, plant it in soil just below the surface. Place the pot in north light. Slender stems and leaves will appear.

Mango: Pry open the pit of a ripe mango with a knife, being careful not to pierce the seed. Plant seed on its side, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch below the soil's surface. Place it in full sun and cover with glass or plastic until it sends up a leafy shoot.

Citrus fruits: Plant the seeds as soon as you remove them from the fruit—don't let them dry out—about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch down in soil. Water well, cover with plastic and place in bright sunlight. In three to four weeks, the seeds will germinate and glossy, fragrant plants will begin to develop. Leave the plastic on until the plants are a few inches high. They thrive in cool, sunny spots.

Papaya: Remove the slippery coating from the brown seeds and plant $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch down in soil. A plastic bag will keep the seeds warm and moist while the green stem, topped with finely cut leaves, emerges. As it grows (in bright sunlight), it resembles a small palm tree.

Pineapple: Before you eat it, cut off the leaves together with 1 inch of the fruit. Scrape out the flesh and set aside to dry several days. Then plant it, with the leaves up, with half of fruit portion under the surface of the soil. Water it well and often and keep it in bright sun. Soon it will root. Someday it may even produce a tiny pineapple.

Sweet potato: A favorite with kids—it's easy and fast. Use toothpicks to suspend potato over glass with tip—the end that looks as if it's been cut—in water. Keep it in a warm sunny spot. Soon vines with morning-glory shaped leaves will appear and climb up your window, if you train them on a string. Keep water level consistent and don't plant in soil.

Pomegranate: Let the seeds dry out for a few days, then place them in potting soil and keep them warm and moist. This is most easily done when kept under plastic. If placed in a sunny window, the seeds will germinate into small leafy plants and grow into attractive, compact shrubs, which may eventually produce edible fruit. Δ

Malabar spinach—great for summer

By Alice Brantley Yeager

When the cool weather of spring gives way to summertime heat, we spinach lovers reluctantly say goodbye to quality spinach from our gardens. Fortunately, there is a summer spinach known as Malabar Spinach and it revels in hot weather. It's unusual, delicious and many of us contend it's even better than regular spinach. If given some TLC and plenty of water, Malabar will produce until fall.

Malabar Spinach is an import from Southeast Asia with an entirely different growth habit than regular spinach. This plant puts out runners that sometimes extend to ten feet and require support in order to keep leaves off the ground and in first class condition. Malabar does not produce tendrils like English peas or cucumbers and runners should be tied loosely to a support or woven back and forth through some type of wire fencing such as hog wire. Old nylon pantihose may be cut into crosswise strips and used for tying as nylon is soft and will stretch to accommodate the growth of stems—not like wire twisters that often interfere with a stem's conduction process. Once Malabar gets started with a support system, it will generally weave its own way leaving the gardener to only occasionally tuck in a straying runner.

Malabar comes in two varieties—*Basella alba*, the all-green one and *Basella rubra*, the one with green leaves and red stems. The latter is a very attractive vine because of its color variation, but the red disappears during cooking. Malabar is a member of the Goosefoot family which also includes beets. If you want a unique and useful conversation plant, train the red-stemmed variety on a porch

trellis or garden shelter where shade is desired in summer.

Planting tips

Through trial and error, I have found that the best way to ensure a good crop of Malabar spinach is to plant the seeds indoors in peat pots about six weeks before spring weather is expected to level off. Transplant out-

grass and weed free and mulched well when dry weather becomes a problem. Mulch also keeps rain from splashing dirt up on lower leaves. Fifteen plants should provide plenty of spinach for an average size family.

I usually wait until plants are about three feet high and climbing before picking any of the leaves as I want plants to have a good start. A fringe benefit of Malabar is that it is virtually



doors about the same time as you would plant okra, watermelons or squash.

The ground should be well worked with no clods and have a pH factor of about 6.0 - 8.0, the same as for many garden vegetables. Malabar likes an open area with plenty of sunshine but will tolerate some semi-shade. It does best planted in loamy, moderately rich, well drained soil but does need sufficient moisture to produce its thick, succulent leaves. Plants should be spaced 12 to 15 inches apart, kept

insect free making washing leaves a snap.

Cooking

When ready to cook Malabar, have enough water in a fairly large pot to make it about a third full. Put in leaves, bring to a boil and let simmer about 5-7 minutes or until leaves are tender but still retain some crispness. (Malabar may become gummy if overcooked.) Stir occasionally to prevent leaves from wilting into a mass. Drain

Malabar spinach salad

Ingredients:

12 medium-size malabar leaves
4 romaine lettuce leaves
3 French sorrel leaves
1 small red onion, sliced and separated into rings
2 eggs, hardboiled and shells removed and sliced lengthwise into quarters
mushrooms
black olives
crountons
cherry tomatoes
your favorite salad dressing
freshly ground pepper

Tear malabar, romaine, and sorrel leaves into bite-size pieces and mix together. Top with onion rings and egg slices. The rest of the ingredients and their amounts are optional and depend on your preferneces. Personally, I prefer an Italian salad dressing with this rather than a creamy one.

As a side salad, this should serve four people.

well and season as you would regular spinach.

A substitute for asparagus may be enjoyed by using the tip ends of the tender runners. Just clip off about 4-6 inches of the tips and cook in a small amount of water. When tender-crisp, season with butter or a light cheese sauce. Cutting off the tips does not harm the plants and will cause more runners to develop.

Malabar is also delicious mixed with other greens and served raw in salads.

I have never seen Malabar in a supermarket. Pity! The nutritional benefits are many as Malabar's leaves are high in Vitamin A, iron and potassium. Like other spinach, Malabar is one of the food plants containing choline and inositol, the substances that assist in preventing hardening of the arteries. And, Malabar is low in calories.

Saving seeds

Near the end of summer, seed savers should watch for very small, odd-looking, erect stems of fleshy pinkish flowers here and there on the twining runners. They will be followed by round, green seeds that turn shiny black when mature. These mature seeds should be picked and spread out to dry on a cookie sheet in a cool shady place. When seeds are thoroughly dry and resemble okra seeds they may be stored in small containers until needed for planting.

So, all is not lost for spinach lovers when summer sun puts an end to the spring spinach crop. That is, if a gardener will devote some space to the versatile Malabar.

Source of supply:

Pinetree Garden Seeds
Box 300
New Gloucester, ME 04260 Δ

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A country moment



*A great horned owl blends into an oak tree.
(Frank Tickle photo)*

Think of it this way...

By John Silveira

Why bureaucracy will likely destroy America

“**C**ivilizations rise and fall,” Dave said and I turned around to see if he was talking to me, but he was still staring at his monitor. I looked over at Mac who was sitting at one of the other computers. He was playing a game. He didn’t seem to hear what Dave had said.

Dave is Dave Duffy, the fellow who publishes this magazine, and Mac is O.E. MacDougal, Dave’s poker playing buddy who lives down in southern California. I guess it’s fair now to say Mac’s my friend, too. He’d come up to the lake for another visit.

“The civilizations of ancient Egypt, Athens, Rome...gone. What happens?” Dave asked.

I looked at Mac. He was still playing the game. I was going to give him some pointers—strategies I had worked out over the last few months—but he seemed to be picking it up rapidly and was doing quite well.

“Ever think about why Athens and Rome fell?” Dave asked.

“No,” I said.

“Sure,” Mac said without interrupting his game.

“Will the United States ever fall like Athens, Rome, and those other countries?” Dave asked.

“Of course it will,” Mac said.

I was surprised to hear him say that and I stopped what I was doing. Dave turned around, too.

“You’re a real ray of sunshine,” I said.

“Do you really think so?” Dave asked Mac.

“Sure. And it’s interesting that you mention the Greeks and Romans. Not only because they’re the ones we’re

most familiar with, but because they have had such a powerful influence on western civilization: our customs, governments, languages, and the way we think. And the failures of both Athens and Rome influenced the Founding Fathers of this country when they formed our government.”

“Well, what happened. I mean, what was it that brought down Athens and Rome?” Dave asked.

“To a large degree, both fell as a direct result of defects in their political systems.”

“What were the defects?”

“With the Athenians it was the excesses of democracy.”

“That sounds dumb,” I said. “How can you have too much democracy?”

Mac looked up at the ceiling for a second. “What do you guys know about the Athenians?”

“Not much,” Dave said.

I shrugged when Mac looked at me.

The Athenian democracy

“First you should know that the Athenian democracy was different from modern democracies. It was a direct democracy.”

“Meaning...?” Dave asked.

“What that meant was that all the enfranchised voters were entitled to meet in the town square and voted on nearly every issue. There was no congress, no parliament, and the citizens had a direct voice in almost all matters. Of course, women, slaves, and people of foreign birth, no matter what their contributions to society, could not participate in the Greek democratic process. So, in that respect, it was a limited democracy. That left only



John Silveira

about 10% of the adult citizens of Athens who could vote. This meant a mere 5% of the adult population could determine policy for everyone else. And almost everything was determined by a simple majority vote—even trials.”

“Just seven out of twelve people could convict you of something?” I asked.

“Seven out of twelve?” he asked. “Oh, no, decisions in trials were determined the same way in which other public matters were resolved, with the crowd. Often hundreds of people came to hear the trials and if you were one of the enfranchised citizens who had come to hear a trial, you were also a juror. Socrates was tried in just such a manner. His exact crime was misleading the youths of Athens by encouraging them to question the

state, its laws, and its religion. His jury, as I recall, was about 800 citizens and he was condemned to death by a vote that ran something like 500 to 300."

"What about the right to free speech?" Dave asked.

"Individuals had no rights as we know them today. Any rights you had were subject to the whims of the crowd. There was no freedom of speech, religion, or freedom from government intrusion into your life unless the crowd decided you were entitled to those rights—and tomorrow they might change their minds."

"So, ancient Athens had a democracy without any rights," Dave said.

"Except the right to vote—and that, only if you were enfranchised, and very few people were."

"It's hard to think of a democracy and the lack of freedom coexisting," I said. "It sounds contradictory."

"Ever read Claire Wolfe's book, 101 Things to Do til the Revolution," Mac asked.

"We ran a review of it," I said.

"She pointed out that most dictatorships today are democracies. And she's right. Today's dictatorships are very often countries in which democracy exists but the people are without freedom and without a basic bill of rights. All of the former Communist Bloc countries and almost every third-world dictatorship hold elections, but no one would call them free countries."

"I never thought of it that way," I said.

"Did the Athenians see the flaws in their democracy?" Dave asked.

"Sure they did. Plato was among those who pointed out that democracy leads to tyranny—and it did so in Athens. But the proposed solutions for the problem, including his own solution, were usually to junk the democracy and replace it with some kind of benign tyranny. For Plato, the rule of

the people should be replaced with the rule of 'philosopher kings.'

"Other philosophers also had their own solutions. But, in reality, those who really succeed in becoming tyrants are anything but philosophers."

The Roman Republic

"Later, the Romans, saw the problems of the Greek democracy—the most salient of which were that there was no stability, because the crowds that showed up to vote could be inflamed or impassioned temporarily, and that the voters couldn't always be available to vote on every issue at hand. So the Romans created a representative form of government to put a buffer between the electorate and the decision making process and to ensure that there was a permanent body in place on a daily basis to conduct the business of the state. This way state policy didn't vary from one day to next on the whim of public opinion. The crowd still voted, but they voted to elect those who were to represent them, just as we do today."

"That was the origin of the Roman Senate, right?" Dave asked.

Mac nodded. "It was one of the world's first legislative bodies. It's also the reason we called early Rome the Roman Republic—republics are essentially representative forms of government."

We nodded knowingly. I don't know why I did because I was feeling like an idiot.

"But the trouble was," Mac continued, "those elected were self-aggrandizing and, as history would show, the republican form of government itself all too often turned into tyranny, too."

"And did Rome become a tyranny?" Dave asked.

"By the time of Julius Caesar the Republic was falling apart as men clambered for power. Caesar had himself made emperor, but there was still enough resistance so that, when he went to the Senate, men who didn't

want an autocrat running the country assassinated him. But that didn't stop other men from wanting to be tyrants and, eventually, Rome was permanently led by an emperor—an absolute tyrant—the first of whom was Augustus, Caesar's nephew. From then on, the Roman Republic didn't exist and we speak of the Roman Empire."

"So a representative form of government wasn't enough to prevent tyranny," Dave said.

"That's right. And that's why centuries later our own Founding Fathers, seeing the major defects of both the Athenian and Roman systems—that the individual was still at the mercy of the state, whether it was the crowd or the emperor—created the Constitution. Our Constitution lists the powers of the state. Any powers not specifically given to the state—in this case, the federal government—are reserved to the people and the separate states that make up these United States. And very soon after the Constitution was adopted, they added 10 amendments which guaranteed that we, as individuals, had certain rights upon which the government could not infringe."

"Our Bill of Rights was the first and only time this kind of bill of rights has been adopted in history. It makes the United States a quirk among nations. Never before, nor since, and perhaps never again will people have the rights Americans have."

"Don't people in other countries have rights in their constitutions?" Dave asked.

"Of course they do. The British do, the Canadians do...any number of other countries do. But, in every other country with a constitution or a bill of rights, the rights of the citizenry—that is, the individuals—is at the discretion of the government."

"But not here?" Dave asked.

"I wish you guys would read our Constitution. It's a recipe for how the

federal government is allowed to govern. It's a document that limits the power of both the central government and the crowd. Then read the first ten amendments, what we call The Bill of Rights, and you'll discover that it's not a bill of rights at all, but a set of restrictions against the government. It never says the people can do something like have free speech or bear arms; it says the government cannot prohibit them."

"What's the difference?" I asked.

"If the source of our rights is the government, then the government can take them away. But, the way the Constitution and, in particular, the Bill of Rights is written, the Founding Fathers assumed our rights exist apart from the state because they exist within us—they're inherent. The state cannot take them away because the state did not grant them."

"So, let me see, what you're saying is, as incongruous as it sounds, democracy confers neither rights nor freedom," Dave said.

"That's right."

"Hmm."

"You don't sound as though you think freedom is going to last in this country," I interrupted.

"No, I don't. In the first place, the Constitution is in shambles. There are all kinds of laws, passed by those who govern us, that contain exceptions to the Constitution—and we put up with it. In the second place, there is a power our Founding Fathers did not anticipate."

"What's that?" Dave asked.

"Bureaucrats."

"Bureaucrats?" Dave asked.

"Yes."

Dave and I didn't say anything for a moment. I was just trying to think of what this all meant and I guess Dave was too.

Finally, Dave asked, "Do you really think bureaucracies can bring a country down?"

Bureaucratic power

"Bureaucracies have been the reason for the stagnation or collapse of several civilizations," Mac said.

"How?" Dave asked.

"First of all, throughout all of history bureaucracies have had more power than most people realize. In every civilization of consequence they've reigned supreme. In ancient Egypt the pharaohs were just figureheads. Egypt



Alexander the Great would conquer most of the world as it was then known to the Greeks. But, as an able administrator, he recognized the importance of preserving the bureaucracies in the lands he conquered.

itself was ruled by one of the first great bureaucracies.

"It was the same with the kings and queens of Europe; they were, with just a few notable exceptions, figureheads while the nations themselves were run by the bureaucrats. These figurehead rulers—the pharaohs, the kings, the emperors—lent an air of legitimacy to the government, but the actual machinery almost always lay in the hands of the bureaucrats. And no one who has ever wanted power has successfully ignored the bureaucracy for very long. If they were unaware it

existed before taking power, they soon learned of its existence and importance. And, if they wanted to retain power, they had to leave it in place.

"Alexander the Great understood the importance of making friends with the bureaucracies and he kept them intact in every city and country he conquered."

"I thought they just slaughtered everyone during their conquests during those days," I said.

Mac shook his head. "Alexander understood the importance of political organizations and made sure, after each conquest, that he preserved the bureaucracy that had been in place. They were the ones who had managed it before he appeared and he knew they were the ones who could keep it running smoothly after he went on to conquer the next city or country. And this was how conquerors would behave throughout most of history.

"Centuries later Niccolo Machiavelli in his book, *The Prince*, warned that when you conquer a country you should keep the bureaucrats in place and not make the mistake of trying to stick your own cronies in there. And he explained why."

"What were his reasons?" Dave asked.

"Like Alexander, he knew that in the bureaucracies the real power lay but that, historically, bureaucrats have always been willing to switch their allegiance from an old regime to a new one—as long as you paid them and let them retain their power."

"You know, that actually makes sense," Dave said.

"Of course it does. History is full of examples where conquerors came and went, but the bureaucrats never changed.

"Very often nations have been shaped, for better or worse, by what the bureaucrats desired, even if it was counter to the welfare of the state."

"Can you give an example?" Dave asked.

China's bureaucracy

"The best one I can think of was in China. Today, China should be the preeminent power in the world, but because of its bureaucracy it didn't happen."

"What did they do?" Dave asked.

"Six hundred years ago, China was much further along technologically, militarily, and culturally than any European country. With their wealth, the size of their navy, the seaworthiness of their ships, and their command of navigation, both North and South America should have been discovered by the Chinese and become Chinese domains.

"During the reign of a Chinese emperor named Yongle, the years between 1405 and 1431 were filled with Chinese exploration. His chief admiral, a eunuch named Zheng He, sailed with more than 300 ships and almost 28,000 men all the way to India, the Persian Gulf, and even Africa. Some of his ships were 30 times the size of any of Columbus' three ships. The Chinese were on the verge of dominating all of the world. Europe should have had Chinese ships entering their ports to trade rather than the other way around. But it didn't happen. And it was clearly not because the Chinese were incapable of it. They could have gone on and on and ruled the entire globe."

"So, what happened?" I asked.

"The Chinese bureaucracy is what happened. It was one of the most powerful that ever existed and wouldn't let it happen."

"Why?"

"Bureaucracies are, by their very nature, extremely power hungry while at the same time very conservative. I don't mean conservative in the political sense we mean today, but in maintaining the status quo. And with the growth of their trading fleet and the rise of a merchant class in China, the bureaucracy saw the first real threat to their power in centuries.

"Even though we, today, can see how the rise of a merchant class and a trading fleet would have benefited China as a whole, the bureaucrats saw them only as threats to themselves. And, since they wielded considerable influence with the Chinese emperor, they induced him to forbid further exploration. They put a limit on how far and to what ports the trade merchants and explorers were allowed to go. They also had almost all of the records of their astounding feats of navigation and exploration destroyed so it would not happen again. They wanted to forever squash any threat to their place in Chinese society and, for all the effect the feats of the Chinese explorers have had on how China developed since then, it may as well never have happened.

"As a result, the Europeans became the world explorers and traders and their power expanded far beyond what one would have thought possible in the years before Columbus sailed. And now the Chinese are playing catch-up.

Other bureaucracies

"There are other examples of bureaucratic power that involve religion, corporations, and military power."

"Religion?" I asked.

"Historically, when the churches held great sway in the political world, they were an ideal place for ambitious individuals to rise to power through the bureaucracy. Let's face it, a young man from a poor family had no chance of becoming a prince and being in line for the throne of England or some other country. But poor young men of ability and ambition often rose through the ranks of the Church to positions of power. And though many who went into the church were sincerely religious, many others seemed mesmerized by the political power they wielded. It was because of such

political power that the Inquisition was possible."

"Are there any positive contributions of bureaucracies?" Dave asked.

"Absolutely. Writing was invented by bureaucrats. Not for the writing of novels or the enlightenment of the masses, but to take inventories and the census, to keep track of taxes, record laws, notate maps, etc.

"And no one—not in China, Europe, or even this country—formed a bureaucracy to tie civilization down. They were meant to make civilization run more efficiently. They were intended to serve as a tool, a means for getting work done and achieving society's objectives. But, historically, they have become an end in themselves and, instead of the servant, they have become the master. This is what happened in the communist countries and, though not to such a degree, it's what's happening in the west."

"Is that what you think is happening here?" I asked.

"Yes. Wherever they are they have gained power, it has been at the expense of the individual. This is how they've operated throughout all of history, so there is very little reason for me to think they will operate any differently in the United States—and the evidence is that they are not.

American bureaucracy

"In fact, how a bureaucracy arises, expands, and aggrandizes power can be seen right here in the United States. We started out with virtually no bureaucracy. When the capital was moved from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., in the year 1800, all that had to be moved were exactly 12 boxes of paperwork.

"But, after that, the bureaucracy began to grow and assume more power, and more branches of government were formed and each needed its own bureaucracy to support it.

"How did it grow?" Dave asked.

"Originally, there were only four cabinets to support the Executive Branch..."

"What's the Executive Branch?" I asked.

"That's the Presidency."

"Oh," I said.

"...they were the Treasury Department, the Attorneys General—now called the Department of Justice, the Department of Foreign Affairs—now called the State Department, and the Department of War—now called the Department of Defense. A little later, the Navy Department was created, but it was eventually incorporated into the Department of Defense.

"For almost a half a century, no new cabinet departments were added, and we still had a relatively small government. But eventually, new ones were added and they changed the way we are governed.

"In 1849, James Polk, one of the Presidents I admire, formed the Department of the Interior."

"For what reason?" Dave asked.

"Under his administration, the United States gained more territory than under any administration before or since. It was an amazing amount of land, over a million square miles, more land than has made up most countries that have ever existed. So, to manage it, he formed the Interior Department.

"It was never intended that this department was to last forever, nor was it intended that the federal government permanently own almost 30% of the United States. The Founding Fathers didn't want the central government to hold that much land and forbade it in the Constitution. But once the Interior Department was formed, it was foreordained that the federal government would never relinquish its power. I'd like to say, in Polk's defense, I don't think it occurred to him the federal government would decide to hold onto the western lands in perpetuity. But they have. It was a blunder on his part.

"After that, the federal bureaucracy continued to grow. Today, there are 14 cabinet level bureaucracies, and they will never go away. And they, along with all the bureaucratic



Although vilified by historians as an advocate of corrupt government—and the word machiavellian has come to mean unprincipled—Niccolò Machiavelli was an Italian patriot who drew his lessons from history, and he understood how men maintained power. He also recognized the power of bureaucracies and instructed those who would rule how to use them.

machinery in this country, have become the unelected and invisible government, and each year they assume more power."

"I never thought about it like this," Dave said.

"You're not alone. I find it funny that so many people in the press, in Congress, and in the electorate, think of reasons why we should limit the terms of office of those who govern us. We limit our presidents to two terms and we're talking about constitutional amendments that would limit the time a senator or representative can spend in Congress. But no one is saying anything about the permanent government—the bureaucracy. The personnel in this permanent govern-

ment have no term limits, yet they pass regulations that have a profound effect on how our lives are conducted, and they are by default largely unaccountable for their actions."

"What about the department heads appointed by the President?" I asked.

"Each time a new President is elected, there are appointed positions to be filled. And these positions very often go to political cronies and large campaign contributors. But the appointees are often ignorant of what their departments do. The result is that the bureaucrats have to train their bosses how to do their jobs. And, when they do, they train them to do it 'the way it's always been done,' so the new appointees rarely if ever bring any meaningful innovation. Then two, four, six, or eight years later a new regime is elected and a new set of appointees replaces the old ones and they have to be trained. In the meantime, the bureaucracy goes on doing what bureaucracies do."

"Don't you think that they mean well?" I asked.

"No. If they were presented with evidence that what they were doing was harmful or wrong, do you think they'd say, 'Well, let's close up shop and go down to the employment office and file claims.' Of course not. They have mouths to feed, mortgages to pay, credit card bills that come due. They have their jobs and they want to keep them.

"If you promise a week's pay, an annual vacation, and a retirement and health plan, you can get very ordinary people to justify their jobs even when their jobs are inherently harmful; even when the job kills, maims, and ruins lives. The Soviet gulags were run by bureaucrats; the Nazi death camps were run by bureaucrats; and in this country, we've taken what is at very worst a critical health problem—drug abuse—and criminalized it. And to handle that, we have a bureaucratic system that runs our prisons very effectively."

"You make it sound as if drug crimes are bureaucratic crimes."

"They are. And because of it, the War on Drugs is a problem that will never go away. The huge bureaucracy that supports law enforcement wants it, the courts want it, and the prison system, as I said, wants it. And because of that, we imprison a larger proportion of our population than any other country in the world—more than China, more than Russia, more than any two-bit African or South American dictatorship.

"And the only reason we can imprison as many people as we do is because we're a rich enough country to support these immense bureaucracies. As we get richer, I predict we will find more crimes to imprison people for...unless the American people call for a halt to it."

"Do you think they will?" Dave asked.

"I'm very pessimistic."

"How do these things get out of control?" Dave asked.

Why have bureaucracies?

"We create bureaucracies to solve problems. But that's not why people become bureaucrats. What motivates the bureaucrat is the promise of a career, not public service. And once created, bureaucracies have a need to expand their power, and that has nothing to do with the political system of the country. The need to expand power is simply its nature. The folks who staff a bureaucratic institution may be capitalists, socialists, royalists, or whatever when they go home. But while they are at their jobs, they are bureaucrats, and expanding their power is their goal.

"Then, the larger a bureaucracy becomes and the more it has to manage, the less those who are subject to the bureaucracy can control it. Given the natural apathy of the majority, the bureaucrats become entrenched by default."

"As they apparently did very well in China," Dave said.

Mac nodded. "Not only that, but bureaucrats often make decisions that favor various special interests and they do so for personal reasons. In this country those interests could be anything from corporations to environmental organizations, and they do it because of the prospect of getting hired by those organizations once they 'retire' from government. While all this is going on, the citizen—the taxpayer—is caught in the middle.

"Another problem with a bureaucracy is its approach to solving a problem. The fact is, it is often against the interests of a bureaucracy to solve a problem. Once solved, unless the solution has created more work for them, they're out of business. So, they aren't always interested in solutions."

"Give me an example of a bureaucracy that wouldn't go out of business," Dave said.

"An easy one is the one John wrote about a while back. When Prohibition ended, did the enforcers go home? Of course they didn't. They were sicced onto a problem that was out of the American mainstream—drugs.

"It was white America that brought Prohibition to an end. So, when it ended, rather than going home, the bureaucrats went after drugs because the only people doing them were blacks and Mexicans. No one cared who was getting thrown in jail until white college kids started seeing the inside of slammer in the '60s. Now, fully one third of the electorate wants at least marijuana decriminalized."

"Give me an example of a bureaucracy that should be scaled back, but it's not happening."

The Cold War is over, and it seemed as if defense spending would be cut back. But today spending is still up while new crisis are found.

"What do you mean? There have been base closures and layoffs..."

He got up and took the 1992 World Almanac and the 1997 World Almanac from the bookshelf.

"Let's look at defense spending since the Cold War ended. In 1987, two years before the Cold War ended, total defense expenditures were about \$274 billion. In 1995, six years after it ended, about \$260 billion. That's not much of a change."

"I didn't realize that," Dave said and Mac handed him the almanacs.

"And when we try to cut bureaucracy by cutting their funding, the bureaucrats threaten revenge."

"How?" Dave asked.

Mac thought a moment. "Let me start with a scenario of how government grows, and then what it does when we try to cut it back.

"From the very earliest days of this country, the citizens expected roads, police and fire protection, and education. Eventually libraries were even included. The enormous growth of government since then has involved everything from farm subsidies to grants to the arts. But, when the tax payers insist on tax cuts and less government spending, is it tree inspectors and artists we're going to lose? No, they tell us they're going to have to lay off police and firemen. The schools will be closed. They never say anything about sending the monumental bureaucracy home. And does the electorate stand up to them and call their bluff? Of course not. They believe this is what must be cut and they back away under bureaucratic threats."

"You sure paint a bleak picture," I said.

"We like to think that somehow we're different from those older civilizations—those civilizations that got bogged down in their political machinery, that stagnated, then folded. As a country, we certainly started out differently, but we're not different now. We've gradually let the bureaucratic superstructure evolve until, here

at the end of the 20th century, we have more in common with the old world countries that have existed since the dawn of civilization than the America we started out with. That America, for better or worse, is gone and will never come back."

"Can't we get rid of the bureaucracy?" I asked.

"First of all, bureaucracies don't 'go away.' They live on forever. Do you think the communist bureaucrats went home when the communists fell out of power? The bureaucrats just changed the title on the nameplates on their desks and continued right where they were."

"As Machiavelli would have predicted they would have," Dave said.

"That's right.

"Besides that, I'm not sure we want bureaucrats to go away. What we want to do is to control them."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"We want them more responsive to our needs and we want the bureaucrats who screw up to be personally responsible for their mistakes.

Controlling bureaucracy

"There's no clear connection between the governed and the bureaucracies, so there's very little input into any bureaucracies. That may be okay in France where the two most powerful forces are the President and the bureaucracy, but in this country the individual is supposed to reign supreme and the government is supposed to exist for his benefit. But the bureaucrats don't see it that way, nor do the politicians, or even the electorate anymore, and because of that this country is becoming more and more European and less and less American.

"But there are steps we could take to make bureaucracies less of a threat the same way our Founding Fathers tried to make the crowd and the legislature less of a threat by giving us a constitution that limits the government's ability to deprive us of our rights. The first

way might be to stress accountability. Someone has to be in danger of losing his or her job—or even going to jail—if a bureaucracy screws up or violates constitutional rights.

"Second, not all bureaucracies allow their members to be unaccountable. The military has a bureaucracy to make it run smoothly and the difference between it and the civil bureaucracy is that the military bureaucracy accepts personal initiative—and responsibility. It allows the individual to override the 'book' but stresses accountability. In fact, that last one, accountability, may be the biggest difference of all. Military personnel who throw the book out risk dishonor when they fail and recognition when they succeed. In civilian bureaucracies, failure is ignored. We should, perhaps, apply principles like that to political bureaucracies.

"Another might be to make it mandatory that there be legislative review of all regulations bureaucracies enact. Let bureaucracies submit laws and regulations to Congress before they can be enacted. It may make things unwieldy, but this country was never meant to run efficiently, it was meant to be free.

"By the way, did you know that only about one percent of all bills proposed in Congress are enacted but that about 99 percent of all regulations proposed by bureaucracies are put into effect. How does that happen? Are we to believe bureaucrats know more about what the American people want than the legislators?"

We didn't answer.

"It also has got to be possible to make a bureaucracy go away. To shut it down. First of all, a bureaucracy should have stated goals and, when those goals are met, it should be shut down.

"Perhaps it should also be possible to make a bureaucracy disappear by referendum so that bureaucracies are directly responsible to the public."

"The I.R.S. would be the first to go," Dave said.

Mac smiled and shrugged.

"But wouldn't that be throwing power back to the crowd?" I asked.

"Yes, it would. But I say it only as a suggestion. Come up with something better. We need to get something going here so that bureaucracies are more responsive and the people have a greater say in what goes on in their lives.

"But what I think would be better would be to allow jury trials by informed juries when people are indicted for violations against bureaucratic rulings."

"What's an informed jury?" I asked.

"We've talked about this before. An informed juror is a juror who realizes that when a citizen is on trial, the law is on trial, too.

"Today, juries are routinely told that they cannot judge the law, despite the fact that they are legally entitled too. No judge can order you to find a defendant guilty when you feel the law is wrong—even when you realize the defendant actually broke the law.

"In fact, since the trials of the Nazis at Nuremberg, Germany, following World War II, it has been a felony in this country to imprison or execute someone when your conscience has told you it's wrong."

"But aren't people always allowed jury trials now?" I asked.

"All too often there are no jury trials, as promised by the Constitution, when you are in violation of bureaucratic code. Two good examples are tax laws and family law.

"Let me ask you something, how does the accused stand when accused of a crime by the government?"

"You're guilty until you're proven guilty," Dave said.

"I don't know how many Americans realize this, but you are actually assumed guilty when prosecuted by the I.R.S. and, not only do they not have to prove you're guilty, they are under no obligation to show cause for indicting you. And, if you can't prove your innocence, you lose. The I.R.S. even admits this is so. I know it runs

counter to our system of justice, but they do it anyway.”

“But,” I said, “They have to do it this way.”

Mac looked at me as if in expectation that I had more to say on the subject.

“If they didn’t do it that way, nobody would pay their taxes...it’s the only way to see that they can collect taxes efficiently so that the government runs efficiently...”

“This is in the name of efficiency?” Mac asked.

“Yes.”

“When our Founding Fathers founded this country and wrote our Constitution and the Bill of Rights, they placed several things far ahead of government efficiency and among them were liberty and personal freedoms. People have died for those freedoms, but the I.R.S. finds them inconvenient.”

“And you feel jury trial...”

“...with jurors who are chosen at random from among our peers as guaranteed by the Constitution, and who are informed of their rights as jurors to question the fairness of the law...”

“Okay, okay” I said. “But that might create new problems.”

“Every solution creates new, and often unforeseen, problems,” he said. “But we can’t let that stop us from trying to solve the problems we have. But I can’t help but think that allowing juries to be a buffer between the individual and the state can’t be all that bad, even if it does create new problems.”

World-wide bureaucracy

“What’s the future?” Dave asked.

“The ultimate bureaucracy will be the U.N. It now has a governing body, it has a standing army, it has overturned the democratic elections in one country, Bosnia, and though it currently gets its money from national governments, there is already in place the

machinery to allow the U.N. to get its finances through direct taxation.”

“Kind of an emerging world government,” Dave said.

“Yes. But those who advocate one world government don’t have history on their side. Whenever and wherever government has acquired too much power, it has invariably become oppressive.

“I used to think if we could take the U.S. Constitution, intact, as the guarantee for individual liberty, that one world government would be okay. But we have the Constitution and it’s already been subverted by our own government—in particular, the bureaucrats”.

“Do you think that if we had a one world government it would be a democracy?” I asked.

“Would it matter? I’ve already pointed out that most dictatorships are democracies. But that would just be one facet of the problems a worldwide government would create.”

“What else do you think would happen?” I asked.

“How long do you think it would be before poor countries could take away the things we, the so-called rich countries, have worked to produce, to benefit themselves. In a worldwide democracy without inherent rights—and we are the only country that has such rights—it will be just a matter of time before we have welfare on a global scope, administered, of course, by bureaucrats whose very existence will depend on them doing their job right.”

“Whose fault is all this bureaucratic takeover?” I asked.

“Yours,” he replied.

“No, really.”

“Really. Ultimately, the responsibility for the abuses of bureaucracies lie with you, me, Duffy...and 260 million other Americans. If the American people said they really wanted more limited government, it would go away. But, though they say they do, they really don’t care and they won’t do

anything about it. If they really wanted it tens of millions would vote Libertarian—even if only for one or two elections—and either elect people who are bent on reducing the size of government and its bureaucracies or just scare the hell out of the Democrats and Republicans so they would actually give us the smaller government they have been promising us for decades.”

“The Libertarians?”

“Those more-freedom-less-government people. But the fact is, Americans don’t really care. No politician or bureaucrat need lose any sleep tonight over what the American people say about wanting less government because the American people don’t really care and they’re getting the government they deserve. The problem is that I too am getting the kind of government they deserve.”

Dave laughed. “There must be some solutions,” he said.

“I often wonder how different things would be if on the back of the tax forms we fill out there was a ballot by which we vote for everyone from President to dog catcher,” Mac said.

“That might give politicians and bureaucrats nightmares.”

“It might. People would be casting their votes when the problems of government was still fresh on their minds.”

Dave looked serious now. “How long before the United States is no more?” he asked.

Mac shrugged. “That’s not an easy question to answer. China never fell, it just kept changing. The fall of Rome took centuries and, even after there wasn’t any Roman Empire left, many Europeans considered themselves Romans. The United States will probably go on for centuries to come, but I guess we’ll be able to say it’s gone when we can say, ‘not one of the Founding Fathers would be able to recognize their creation any more.’”

“That doesn’t sound good for us,” Dave said and Mac went back to his computer game. Δ

From triumph to tragedy to triumph again, Dorothy Ainsworth makes her valiant comeback

BHM readers are familiar with Dorothy Ainsworth, the log home-building Ashland, Oregon, waitress who spent more than six years building a beautiful log home, only to have it burn down in 1995 in a tragic fire. We featured Dorothy's ongoing story in 1994 (issue 27), 1995 (issue 32), and 1996 (issue 38), and the mail rolled in in response to those articles. Here is the final chapter in Dorothy's heroic saga. — Editor)

By Dorothy Ainsworth

As far back as I can remember I wanted the security of owning a piece of land, a spacious rustic home, and a loving partner to help me and share it with. It didn't quite work out that way. I ended up waitressing for a living, rearing two kids by myself, and we were all cooped up in an apartment in town.

The frightening concept of now or never hit me at 40. The children were grown, but I was still young and



The first log home burns on June 29, 1995.

strong and full of hope, I was determined to reach my goals in this short life, even if I had to do it alone.

I found 10 acres in Oregon, bought it with a farm loan, and harnessed myself up like a mule for the long haul. With waitress tips and how-to books, I learned as fast as I could to correct my mistakes, and paid as I progressed. In 14 years, I managed to build 10 structures: pumphouse, concrete water storage tank, concrete root cellar, barn, shop, storage shed, small guest cabin, piano studio, a log home that accidentally burned to the ground in 1995, and now, a new log home nearly identical to the house that burned.

My most powerful resource has been drive, and my most limited— money. I earned \$12,000 a year as a waitress. But today I'm debt free, except for my land payment.

I chose vertical log construction because the logs were short, portable, and cheap to get with a permit from the U.S. Forest Service. (My son and I

cut and carried them.) I practiced first on a 1000 sq.ft. piano studio (story in *BHM's* issue no. 27) before tackling my real house, a 2100 sq.ft. barn-style structure I designed for strength and simplicity.

The main house was well underway (foundation in) when I met a "Bunyanesque" hunk (Kirt) at the fitness center. Never mind he was half my age, we fell in love and time stood still. Kirt insisted on helping me cut and carry the 300 logs I needed for the house. Every "date" for three months was a romantic rendezvous into the woods, where togetherness meant one of us on each end of a log. We "bonded" like construction adhesive.

After stockpiling the logs, Kirt resumed the pursuit of his own goals, and I kept working on the house as my personal quest. Over the next six years, I put in 6,000 hours of labor, asking for Kirt's help only with extremely heavy tasks.

Finally, the big day arrived. On June 28, 1995, I finished up the house with



Dorothy Ainsworth



The completed second log home

a beautiful coat of stain on the logs, and then playfully attempted to carry Kirt across the threshold. Our hysterical laughter was short-lived. On June 29th, a tiny ‘apparently’-dry linseed oil rag spontaneously combusted and burned the house down while we were both at work (story in *BHM*’s issue No. 38).

That tragic evening, standing together in the black rubble, holding onto each other for dear life, Kirt stated in no uncertain terms: “Honey, I want to bring your house back for you. It was your life’s dream. I’ll take a leave of absence from my job, and do all the major work this time. You can bring home the bacon, be the director, and help with the finish work. OK?”

Still in a state of shock, I shuffled around in the charcoal and nodded meekly.

The rebuilding

Right after the fire, help started pouring in, and our spirits were

buoyed up by waves of moral support in a sea of positive people. A music benefit held in my behalf raised \$6,000, and another \$3,000 in dona-



Kirt Meyer

tions came from generous *BHM* magazine readers. Although I had neglected to update my construction insurance policy since completing the floor, at least I had some coverage, including tool replacement. With that sum total, plus my perpetual waitressing job, I was back in business by August.

Before the coals had cooled, one professional log home builder had called and promised to sell me a gigantic load of logs at his cost and said he’d deliver just like pizza. It sounded too good to be true, and it ultimately was.

So first we leveled the site with a tractor and blade. The original house was on huge creosoted piers which burned off, so this time we poured concrete sonotube piers on underground footings. Kirt connected them with a grid of 10-inch x 10-inch DF girders, with shouldered half-lap joints anchor-bolted down over each pier.

The T&G subfloor (7/8-inch OSB) was supported by 2-inch x 12-inch



Kirt works on foundation grid.

joists on 16-inch centers, and fastened with screws.

The 40-foot x 46-foot deck was finished and ready to receive the logs, but where were they? Late October rolled around and it was getting cold.



Eric, Dorothy's son (left), Vadim, and Kirt guide the horizontal beam with tenon into its mortise on the upright log.

Grizzly Log Homes called with grizzly news of a log shortage, then quit returning my calls altogether. In a panic, I ran down to the USFS office for a permit, but was stopped in my tracks. The Clinton Plan had temporarily closed all local logging on federal land to study spotted-owl habi-

tats. That included our old stomping grounds, a beetle-kill area 20 miles away, where Lodgepole pines, pre-felled by rangers, were lying all over the ground like giant toothpicks. They were semi-dry and relatively light, so I would have been able to help lift and

carry again.

We were desperate to find a private source before the winter storms. After hours of diligent research and numerous phone calls, I finally struck it rich. A sympathetic land owner only 25 miles away agreed to let us take what we needed from his 600 timbered acres if we thinned crowded trees, burned slash piles, and didn't use a winch. (The USFS does not allow winching either because it tears up the land.)

It was November 1 and the skies looked ominous. In just three short weeks, Kirt "Hercules" Meyer, the human forklift, felled 100 trees, limbed them, bucked them to length, and carried them single-handedly to



Kirt places foundation beam.

the truck, without incident, accident, or injury.

These huge green logs were so horribly heavy (some 500 pounds), I couldn't lift my end of a single log this time. My job was driving the old Ford ½ ton pickup with 1 ½ tons of logs in each load. It took 25 loads.

Witnessing these excursions of exertion was one of the most awe-inspiring and profound experiences in my life. If this rough-hewn guy with



Kirt hefts the ridgepole supports onto the scaffolding.



Kirt and Vadim placing the ridgepole shoulders an axe-handle wide wasn't the marryin' man, he was certainly the carryin' man.

By November 21 we had stockpiled 300 logs (It was just like a second honeymoon) and began peeling them

with a drawknife and squaring off the ends to specific lengths.

The log-dominated “timber-frame” incorporated mortise and tenon joints to tie it together. Like a standard timber frame, it consisted of four bents (two upright posts and a horizontal beam) creating three bays (space between bents), joined together by connecting girts (also logs), and reinforced with knee braces.

Due to the unconventional nature of the construction (slow and deliberate techniques requiring extreme accuracy), I was unable to use the services of any of the enthusiastic volunteers after the fire with one exception. He was Vadim Agakhanov, a Russian immigrant, contractor, engineer, workaholic, and great friend. He tirelessly donated his exceptional craftsman skills to the project whenever he had a spare moment. That is, until he met my daughter, Cynthia. He generously continued to help, but had fewer spare moments.

The framing began with the most critical job inherent in my design—the (shouldered) mortise and tenon joints. Kirt laid each bent out as it



Kirt predrills log. He will toenail it to the deck with 12-inch polebarn spikes.

would appear standing up, flattened and squared the surfaces where tenons would plug in, and cut the mortises (slots) just so, using a small electric chainsaw, ship's auger, and chisel. He cut tenons on the ends of the four 20-foot horizontal logs after taking great care to insure 90 junctions when the big “Hs” were reassembled standing upright and plumb.

Everything had to be kept level and square with the imaginary centerline of each log. He shimmed the smaller end up off the floor so the measurement from floor to centerline was the same along the entire length of the log.

As a team, Kirt and Vadim erected the post and beam members one at a time, fastening the 14-foot verticals (posts) of each “H” to the floor (and into the 10-inch x 10-inch below) with 12-inch pole-barn spikes in pre-drilled holes. Then they raised the horizontal monsters (beams) of each “H” with a manual Genie-Lift (rented lightweight forklift), slid the tenons into their



Kirt installs picture window stops with screws.



Kirt builds the round window for living room.

respective mortises, drilled holes through the joint, and drove the pegs home.

Next, all four “Hs” were joined together by connecting girts lag-bolted to the posts. With the basic rectangular frame now secured, there was only one way to go—up. Way up. More vertical logs would support the ridge-pole, rafter ties, and top plates (all 9-inch x 9-inch beams). The log lengths were calculated to create a 6 in 12 roof pitch.

Kirt hoisted the logs onto a 8-foot tall roll-around scaffold (rented), precariously stood them up in the middle of each horizontal span (on pre-flatted

spots), and spiked them in place.

He then climbed back down to the deck to operate the Genie-Lift again, this time with the concentration and finesse of a mortal man who has great respect for Newton’s Law.

Vadim had arrived for this big event and was perched 20 feet up on another scaffold, waiting with sledge in hand, to do the dastardly deed—

pound rebar down through each joint and into the log. (Better him than me this time!) I could hear an imaginary drum roll as they repeated this balancing act until all 12 roof framing beams were installed. We sighed with relief, and jokingly scoffed at earthquakes.

Working together, they eagerly stabilized the structure with 4-inch x 10-inch rafters on 4-foot centers, using custom rafter hangers at the ridge and 5/8-inch rebar at the overhang end (driven down through rafter and top plate).

T&G pine (2-inch x 6-inch) went on over the rafters to create an attractive



Vadim and Kirt, donning protective sleeves, handle heavy double-paned picture window glass.

vaulted ceiling, then rigid foam insulation, then OSB sheathing, tarpaper, and finally a handsome fireproofed metal roof.

Kirt methodically put up the outside walls, one log at a time, swapping the log ends alternately (big end up, big end down) to even out the taper and keep the walls plumb. He set the logs 2-inch over the edge of the floor perimeter for a drip edge, and spiked them in place. Where he used a small sledge with one hand and 10 whacks, I had previously used a hammer with both hands and 40 whacks. I could see that with manpower, this house was going to go up fast.

The inner walls remained rustic with the logs visible, but the outer walls had to be insulated. He furred them out with 2 x 4s to receive fiberglass batts and sheetrock, then chinked between the logs on the outside with foam pipe insulation and caulking.

Next came the windows and doors to button the place up. Kirt built 36 window frames from small-knot pine



Open living room with curtains closed to diffuse bright sunlight

and set the glass with moulding and brass brads. Friction-operated case-ment hardware (Whitco awning-style hinges) opened rows of windows east and west for cross-ventilation. Kirt and Vadim donned their protective grommet-studded sleeves to handle the huge and heavy glass panes for the picture windows.

I built nine doors from T&G 2 x 6 pine boards held together with battens and big black bolts, and hung them with old barn hinges (sandblasted and painted black).

Another one of my jobs was to precisely cut and fit the curved knee braces (45-degree braces at every 90-degree junction) and bolt them in place. Knee braces are critical components of a timber-frame; they help keep the structure from racking over time. I used small curved logs for aesthetic appeal.

I fashioned a “tree” in the loft, to be employed as a king-post, and attached the “branches” (struts) to the trunk with rebar, and to the rafters with screws.

The only items I was able to salvage from the wreckage were my hanging knee braces (chains and turnbuckles),



The interior house view from the second floor

and the nautical porthole (cast iron) in the front door. After sandblasting and painting them black, I used them as before.

I hired an electrician to do the extensive industrial-type wiring, but Kirt and Vadim did the plumbing (as I had done on house number 1). I installed

the sinks, toilets, and appliances, over time, as I acquired them.

Some thoughts

When I designed the original house, I gave myself permission to satisfy, not deny, my eccentricities. From years of forethought and soul-searching I knew exactly what I wanted, within the confines of my budget of course.

My home would be spacious, well-lit, and functional, with simplicity and naturalness prevailing throughout. “Rusticity” would insure low-maintenance housekeeping. (I’d rather dig in the garden than dust knick-knacks.)

My list of mandatory amenities included a huge dining room table (the “happening place” in any home), a massive butcher block and a deep auxiliary sink in the kitchen, river-rock showers, and two round picture windows (one in living room, one in den). I did a lot of scrounging, reconditioning, and Rube-Goldberg adaptations to get what I wanted on a low, low budget. My sinks were \$1 each at the dump, the kitchen counters and table are made from laminated beams out of a demolished theatre (free!), and a



An interior house view from the first floor



*View from the kitchen with see-through counter into the living area.
Pots and pans hang from iron pipe with flanges screwed to logs.*

futon bed frame from Goodwill ended up as sink framing in the kitchen.

Poverty is the mother of fabrication. I learned to take common materials made for one purpose and use them to create something entirely different. I call it possibility thinking. My stair railing is iron pipe, elbows, and flanges. So is the coat rack and kettle hanger. Electrical conduit (1/2-inch)

painted black, and shower curtain rings (black), and grommets, hang white cotton duck curtains I made from \$3/yd fabric from WalMart.

Now that all is said and done (twice!) I am pleased with the results and I'm glad I didn't compromise my wishes away.

Final thoughts

On the day of the fire, bleary-eyed with tears, Kirt made a very noble promise, and as clear-eyed as a super hero he kept it. Only two years later my knight in natural armor (steely muscles and a T-shirt) carried me over the threshold this time.

I've come to the conclusion that it's better to have built and rebuilt than never to have built at all.

What's everybody doing now?

The fire changed Kirt's profession. He got his contractor's license and is now a builder. He and Vadim are partners in Home Renaissance Co.

Son, Eric, is a classical pianist, composer, tuner, and teacher in Ashland, Oregon.

Daughter, Cynthia, is a professional photographer in Hollywood. You can read a little more about her in the



Kirt and Dorothy

February, 1998 issue of *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, as one of the contest winners of Fun & Fearless Females of 1997.

Dorothy? She finally threw her apron away after 38 years of waitressing and is working at home doing a variety of jobs, including freelance photography. She's editing her videotapes of building the first house, and she will have an instructional tape ready this year. Δ

Treasures

*I was a little boy,
Walking along the beach in
Marblehead,
When I found jewels blue
 black white green,
Each smooth and radiant.
I was stunned, knowing others
 must have come this way,
Yet they passed them by.
I filled my pockets,
Until I was wealthy with their
 bulging,
Then ran home where,
With triumph and excitement,
I took them from my pockets to
 show
And they were just stones
 and fragments of broken bottles.
And my father smiled,
But when he turned away,
I examined them more closely
Struck now by how ordinary they
 were,
Now that they were dry.
Then I returned to the beach
Where I dropped them back into
 the surf
Where they glistened again like
 jewels,
And left them for another traveller.*

John Silveira
Ojai, CA

Make a garden in the desert

By Hank Rettig

An organic compost garden in Las Vegas? Are you kidding? The answer is "No!" As an antidote to the stresses of teaching in the University of Nevada system, I became an off-duty desert compost gardener. That's when I became a student again, learning by trial and error. I mulched my thoughts and composted experiences which I gladly share with all of you who are interested.

Lesson 1: I learned that a garden is a miniscule model of nature at work. Composting alone is the evidence of things unseen within the gestation of Mother Earth; you don't contend with the earth mother. You adjust and adapt to whatever makes the growing work.

Lesson 2: Water, of course, is a key factor, but I saw first hand what pond water can do for a nearby garden. My garden was built around a 36- by 16-foot pond I made in the back yard of my one-half acre lot located just south of the so-called fabulous Strip of towering hotels and theme parks. Pond water teems with life and acts like a watery composting generator. I shoveled enriched mulched algae into my wheelbarrow and mixed it with grass clippings, leaves, garbage (no meat), sawdust from my firewood pile, ashes, desert blown sand and manure from a neighbor's horses. What happens in a compost pile is something one cannot see; micro-organisms work in mystery.

Desert soils, often topping caliche, are poor in organic matter. They tend to lack structure and are hard and tight when dry, and mushy when wet. Clay soil drains slowly and light soil dries

out quickly, especially in the desert heat. That is why composting is so important. A balanced compost mix does the job without having to buy expensive commercial garden foods.

My compost bin was built with old boards from my odds and ends depart-



ment. It is a four-foot high boxed area for the wastes. A wooden trellis like barrier rests between layers of compost. This provides increased permeability and aeration for the benefit of the micro-organisms that do the work. In the summer a roll of plastic material covers the bin for "cooking." The sun's rays permeate the plastic to create a hot house; in the cold seasons of late fall and winter, the hot house humidity after routine watering, does the job.

As for the garden area, trees watered by slow leaks from the pond provide

shade for the crops. By the time summer temperatures get to 110 degrees, the crops are all eaten or harvested. That is when I get ready for early fall planting for the harvesting in the desert cold winter.

Lesson 3: I don't get caught up in the fancy language of so-called expert gardeners. I learned that a local gardening club of hobbyists with money to spend stressed the importance of pH soil conditioning. It was said the pH between 6 and 6.8 was needed for releasing food to plants. I heard that balancing required limestone and aluminum sulfate and varieties of special "bought-un" fertilizers. I heard words like nitrogen, phosphorus, potash, trace elements of iron, copper, zinc, manganese, etc. The words sounded like semantical magic and I laughed to myself as I, with nosey common scents smelled out the basic natural goings-on between my compost mix and the above-ground, boxed garden of promising fledgling plantings.

Lesson 4: Back to the mystique of the pond—out of nowhere frogs appeared for security guard duty against insects in the garden. Birds from somewhere joined the search and seizure actions, often catching insects in flight. In this way they seemed to repay me for providing them with a water hole and bird bath.

Lesson 5: I scheduled by staggering the planting. Once a package of seeds grows in the soil, it will produce more than can be eaten at one time. By staggering the planting a week apart the produce appears at just the right time for balancing supply and demand.

Consider one common error of some gardeners like myself. In the beginning, I tore open the top of a package of seeds and shook the open package along the planting trench. When the tiny seedlings sprouted they did so in an overcrowded heap and I had to do

extensive thinning and transplanting. After that I shuffled some seeds into my hand and with thumb and forefinger, picked one or two seeds, gently pushed them into the trench and covered them with soil. What a savings! All I had to do was to follow the packages' instructions on the variable depths of dirt required to cover the seeds.

Lesson 6: Too much hoeing and cultivating against weeds can cause root injury. I used newspaper as a help in the planting after the seedlings had come up. My seedling plants were surrounded with newspaper. The zinc and ink in the paper killed certain bacteria; the paper itself prevented weeds from getting hold of the seedlings and it helped hold water in the ground.

Strictly as an experiment I used dish water and vinegar mixed in cans of water, then sprayed the earth to kill nematodes and harmful bacteria. I also bought earthworms from a local bait shop to help till the soil and improve oxygen movement. This also prevented crusts from forming on the soil after watering.

Lesson 7: Seed tips. Weeds may have to be pulled out. It's easier when the soil is wet. If rye grass is available this can be put on top of the soil. It does not affect crop seeds, but reduces weeds.

It is not good to plant seeds that take too long to germinate, especially in fall or late spring planting. Corn is an example when it develops into the cold of winter or the heat of summer.

I don't keep last year's seeds unless directions indicate a longer life. I favor fresh seeds to save time and energy and provide me with a better guarantee for production. Onion varieties are poor, while celery, cabbage, spinach, tomato, squash, and eggplant seeds can last for five years.

I water my plants less as they develop but do it longer.

Lesson 8: As for bugs, there are good and bad ones as among humans. "Good-for-the garden" lady bug beetles feed on white flies, parasitic

wasps, and surphid flies. For every parasitic bug there is another type of predatory bug which balances the equation.

Giving plants a strong shower provides a force of water for reducing the bug population. I added a detergent to the water which breaks up the pests' resistance to the shower.

While I was aware that I could find proper chemicals from any nursery to destroy pests, a balanced ecosystem such as I have, helps. I refer to the sanctuary of my pond where birds and frogs take care of most insects.

Squash bugs are some of the hardest to control. They puncture squash and pumpkin shells injecting a poison that causes the plant to die or produce wounds that allow rotting organisms to enter. Squash bugs lay eggs on the underside of leaves. They seek shaded areas. I put a small board down for them to get under and later pick the board up for use in squashing—the squash bugs.

Earworm and other moths produce young caterpillars which can be more easily detected, pulled away and squashed upon the ground. Many bugs thrive at watering times. I water early in the morning so that plants are dried by evening and damp soil surfaces are prevented and discourage bugs. By having a compost pile near the garden area, many pests can be attracted away from the garden. An active compost pile becomes a gourmet food source for pests and micro-organisms. This activity breaks up the compost for later use as garden soil—and disperses pests from the garden.

I positively use the negative sow or pill bugs as minute mowing machines by using straw moistened by water spray. The bugs get so happy digesting the straw that they neglect plants such as tomatoes.

Lesson 9: As an experimental organic gardener, I know that leftovers known as odds and ends junk often come in handy. A small piece of wire, for example, was just the thing for reattaching a wind blown bean pole to

its vine. A used glass jar with round screw-on top was used for growing seedlings in the sunlight by a window before spring planting time. Rusty nails were used to provide the soil with iron. Odd pieces of copper wire were used to draw electricity from the air into garden soil. Tin cans were used for timed watering, by punching a small hole into the bottom, filling the can with water and letting the leak nourish a plant like clockwork. Plastic bags used by cleaners to cover garments served to cover early winter vegetables while drawing the sun to keep soil from freezing. The ground area became a miniature hot house. A four-by-four piece of chicken mesh wire made an excellent sieve for screening and transferring past used soil full of vegetation to another location; the screened soil, mixed with fresh mulch, became the base for a new growth area. The screened-out materials were composted for further disintegration.

A simple piece of string can be utilized creatively. In the timely growing of cabbage it can make a difference between an early or late crop. When the cabbage leaves arise out of the soil and look very uncabbage-like, almost like lettuce leaves, a piece of string tying the leaf tops together encourages the cabbage heads to bundle up faster.

A final piece of advice—don't fall into the trap of spending precious money for gardening gadgets and chemicals and end up paying inflationary prices for produce. Unless you can **do it** for less, using what's available in your ecological storehouse, you might as well **buy** the vegetables.

A lost tourist said to a gardener, "Mister, I'm lost. Can you tell me how ...?" "I don't know," the gardener answered. After a few more questions and more don't know answers, the uppity tourist snorted, "Don't you know anything?" The gardener dourly replied, "Well, at least I'm not lost."

In my garden I never feel lost. Δ

Ayoob on firearms

By Massad Ayoob

Coping with gun control in paradise

I'm writing this on a borrowed typewriter outside a Honolulu conference room while my class is listening to a videotape. The topic is judicious use of deadly force in self defense. The students range from cops and police instructors to crime victims. One is a reporter who used to write blistering editorials against guns and their owners, but had her consciousness raised while doing a story on a rape victim who, with her unrepentant attacker about to be released from prison, said that the helplessness she'd felt since the original attack would never go away.

Hawaii's gun laws are among the most restrictive in the nation. The county police chiefs, one on each island, have the absolute right to grant or deny permits to carry concealed weapons. They have chosen for the most part to deny. On the island of Oahu there are said to be fewer than half a dozen such permits. One, not surprisingly, was supposedly issued to a former chief of police. Another allegedly went to an anti-gun former prosecutor. One belongs to the civilian armorer who repairs the department's firearms. I was told one was once issued by a former anti-gun chief of police to his sister, but he had to rescind it in the face of public outcry.

The cops aren't that much better off. A week ago, an off-duty Honolulu officer confronted a crazed man armed with a handgun and terrorizing a crowd. When the cop attempted to calm the situation, the suspect turned on him with the weapon and the officer had to fire his off duty gun, a compact 9mm pistol, with fatal results. Had that one armed good guy not been present, the death toll caused by the suspect could have been hideous. The

citizens were lucky. There are 800,000 people on Oahu, and only a couple thousand cops.

Once retired, the officer in Hawaii can no longer carry a weapon unless he's an anti-gun chief who upon retirement gets a permit from his anti-gun replacement. After 20 or 30 years of sending felons to prison, the officer is now helpless to protect himself or his family from vengeful ex-cons who thought the movie "Cape Fear" was a training film.

Once again, the backwoods lifestyle comes to the rescue to some degree. You may possess a weapon and carry it on your own property. The only Hawaiians I've seen with handguns while out and about are those on working ranches. The ability to have the wherewithal to protect themselves and their loved ones has been a key factor for many in making the decision to escape the rat race and live rurally.

At least one can have a gun at home, with a permit to purchase or possess granted by the police department. Upon arrival I registered my .40 caliber Glock 27, which can be loaded only on the shooting range or while in the domicile of my hotel room.

This place is as beautiful as everyone says. There are many higher crime cities than Honolulu, yet one has to wonder when signs reading "Caution: High Theft Area" are posted in the parking lot of a shrine as sacred as the USS Arizona memorial at Pearl Harbor. Being raped in a low crime city must have been a great comfort to the victim my reporter friend wrote about.

The Hawaii Rifle Association, the state level organization that fights for the civil rights of gun owners, will try

this year to pass "shall issue" concealed carry legislation based on the Florida model. I devoutly hope that they succeed, and that Representative Clifford Stearnes of the latter state is equally successful with HR339, his bill that would allow law abiding citizens to be licensed to carry guns nationwide. Even in paradise, it's no fun being helpless. Δ

Walking to Work

*I walked to work that day,
Two miles each way,
Though I can't remember why I
chose to
That particular morning.
And just before Bard Road
I passed a worm
That was crawling across the
sidewalk
Toward the traffic on Saviers
Road.
I glanced at it
But forty...
Maybe fifty yards
Further along
I stopped,
Retraced my steps,
And there it was,
That damned worm
Inching closer to the curb.
And I,
Hunter of deer,
Killer of rabbits, ducks, coots,
and quail,
Picked it up
And tossed it into the adjacent
yard,
Far from the sidewalk,
Where there were flower beds,
And where it would survive,
Then resumed my journey—
But have spent the last eleven
years
Wondering why*

John Silveira
Ojai, CA

Home sweet home?

By Danny C. Blevins

The day I moved into what I then affectionately called my dream house was the most exciting day of my life. Cradled in the Tennessee mountains with a bubbling brook flowing nearby and birds chirping from perches high in a thousand tulip poplars, the long cabin at first glance seemed like paradise.

I stood in front of the house and imagined a virtual Garden of Eden spread before me. I would mature there, watch my family grow, and live out my golden years in a house very much like the one my forefathers built some 200 years before. By the time I left the cabin in the Tennessee woods, I knew why my forefathers had chosen to stop building log cabins and why they had invented the brick.

From the moment I moved my scarce bags through its front door until the day I waved happily goodbye to the house in my rearview mirror, I fought animals for possession and ownership of the house. It began the very first night. I came strolling into the bedroom with full intentions of going to bed when I noticed ants scampering across the floor like sheep before their owner. Red ants. Fire ants. Common big-as-a-finger-that-look-like-they-were-ready-to-carry-my-bed-and-deposit-it-in-the-nearby-creek ants. They were everywhere. In my bed. On the walls. And worst of all, running up my bare feet. Before that memorial night was through, I had assaulted them with every poison legally available to man and a couple not quite legal. At 3:00 a.m. the battle was at its fiercest with ants dying by the hundreds in my wake, yet the outcome was still unclear. When daylight finally arrived, all that remained of the

night's fight were scattered and rotting carcasses of dead insects that litter the landscape. Somehow, I had won. I had claimed the cabin as my house.

For two blissful months, I lived happily in my cabin, having blocked out the ant incident as a freak accident of



nature. After all, what should I expect from a house that had been unoccupied for several months. What happened next left me dumbfounded and amazed.

One day, as I was walking through my house, I noticed a bee bouncing off my ceiling. Going to get a magazine to give it a humane yet dignified end, I saw another one. Then another one. Suddenly bees were everywhere. They were coming out of my walls in an apparent attempt to settle new country for the mother hive. As I ran screaming to the local hardware store, I almost thought I was in one of those old horror movies where giant bees attack New York and eat the Statue of Liberty in one quick gulp. After three cans of the best bee poison \$40.00 can buy, the bees, like their cousins the ants, lay in smoldering piles in every corner of the house, and peace once again reigned, for awhile at least.

Next came the rats. But these were not ordinary rats neither in size nor attitude. These rats were the grandmother of all rats. Put out a box of

poison for these rats and the next day you would find everything gone, including the box. These rats mocked all attempts to keep them out of the house by using steam drills to make holes in walls where they deemed necessary. These rats used common rat traps to pick their teeth, and patrolled yards hoping to ambush unsuspecting tomcats. Well, maybe I exaggerate a little, but they were mean suckers and I fought them for governing control of my cabin for two months.

During that two months, life in that cabin resembled more of a war zone than a peaceful mountain cabin. Let's say I was watching television and wanted a glass of water. I would walk to the kitchen door, pick up my .22 rifle loaded with rat shot, and jump into the kitchen screaming a blood-curdling cry of a commando who had just found his enemy. At my cry the rats on guard duty would scamper for their bunkers, and I would get off a shot if they hesitated in the least. Then I would get my drink of water, back out of the kitchen with my gun at the ready, and go about the pleasurable business of watching T.V.

It took me two months to get rid of the wretched creatures, and for the sake of a family magazine, I will not go into the process I used to exterminate them. Just let me say it involved a stick of dynamite, a small box of six-inch nails, and a collie that had been dead for three days.

With the rat episode safely behind me, it took the next three months to calm my frayed nerves and get back to normal in my house. Had I been married, this would have been the time for the little woman to demand a different house or a different husband. But since I lived alone, I considered myself tough and felt I had taken the

worst Mother Nature could give me and I had prevailed. Wrong again.

The next assault by Mother Nature happened innocently enough, I guess. One day while I was working in my office, I heard the pitter-patter of little feet in the loft of the house. After some brief investigating, I discovered the little feet had little pointed ears and a big bushy red tail. A cute, adorable, lovable, wouldn't-hurt-a-thing-on-earth red squirrel had taken up temporary residence in the top of the house. I smiled as he happily scampered from the walnut tree next to my house to store his nuts in his special place in the top of my house. Being the naturalist I am, I considered myself lucky and even told myself he had chosen my house because he could sense I was not going to hurt him, but was willing to live in peace with him and all creatures. During those early fall days, I would hear the thump-thump-thump of his little feet as he stored his nuts in the top of the house, and I only smiled. A log cabin in the Tennessee mountains, animals living with me, Mother Nature everywhere, what man could be luckier? I felt a little like Grizzly Adams.

One night about 2 a.m. everything changed. As the snow quietly fell outside, I remember I was having a dream about being on a beach with scantily clad women when the dream suddenly changed. In my dream a bear was chasing me and trying to eat my house. The dream was so realistic, I could hear his incessant gnawing at the walls of the house. Then I realized I was not dreaming and something was gnawing a hole in the ceiling of the house. Jumping out of bed, scantily clad myself, I raced for my rifle and a flashlight and climbed into the loft of the house to go hand to paw combat with the bear. There I watched in amazement as red squirrels ran for cover under the beam of light. It seems my little furry friend had invited his friends over and were gnawing at the hard shells of the walnuts stored in my attic, a sound, I might add, that

sounds remarkably like a 2x6 rafter being clawed by a bear paw. Shaking my head and going back to bed, I made a mental note to remove all of those nuts in the morning and to shoot every squirrel that came within 200 yards of my house.

Twenty minutes later, it started again. A high-pitched handsaw-going-through-tough-old-wood sound that is impossible to sleep by and just as irritating to listen to during daylight hours came from every part of my loft. And so began my war with the red squirrels. Over the next six months, I shot, poisoned, stabbed, stepped on, and chased hundreds of red squirrels from the loft of my house. The more I chased away, the more that came. It was as if they had posted my name and number in a local sleazy squirrel bar—"For a good time come to the Blevins cabin and ask for Bennie." I removed the nuts, but that did not stop them. These squirrels had found a place to hang out, play cards, shoot pool, or whatever squirrels do in the dead of winter for fun, and they were not going to give it up without a fight.

An average incident was very similar to the rat episode. I would be watching T. V. when I would hear the thump-thump-thump of little feet in the loft of the house. I would poke the loft with a broom handle, and at this the squirrels would run screaming their little squirrely screams toward the nearest hole of the loft before the fat landlord below caught them. I would then get my rifle and run outside, hoping to catch them exiting the hundred or so holes they had created in every corner of the house. If I got a shot, I was lucky. If I killed one, I was ecstatic and could live peaceably in my own house for a few days before the squirrel gang of toughs came back to get revenge on me in the early hours of the morning.

I have been lucky enough to see many countries of the world and I have spent some miserable nights of sleep in some pretty sleazy parts of

these countries, but I can honestly say I slept less during that six months than at any time in my life. At one point I considered blowing holes in the ceiling with my 12 gauge shotgun, but the answer to this little problem finally came in the most unlikely place. My answer was simple, a chain saw and a sonic rodent machine.

First, I cut every tree within 200 yards of my house. This made the house seem as if it was in the middle of a golf course, but I would sacrifice a little scenery for a few hours sleep. Finally, I purchased one of those anti-rodent sonic sound machines. You have probably seen them advertised on one of those infomercials at 3:30 in the morning with the Ginsu knives and the vacuum cleaner that cuts your hair. The premise to this little machine is ingenious. The machine, which is compact and simply plugs into any electric outlet, gives off sound vibrations that rodents hate. Thus, the rodents stay away from the sound and the vibrations. And believe it or not, it worked. One day I had 40 families of squirrels living in the top of my house in a multi-level condo with plans for a pool, and the day after installing the machine, no squirrels.

To say I was a happy camper is a gross understatement. Finally I could get a good night's sleep and not worry about a ball of red fur gnawing a hole in my ceiling and falling on my face in the middle of the night. I had once again proven I was a mountain man. I had taken the best Mother Nature had to offer, and though it was close, I had won. Or so I thought.

Not many days after installing the vibrating sound machine, I awoke after a blissful night's sleep and sleepily walked into the bathroom. I pulled off my clothes and got into the shower, and like something out of a soap commercial, I was allowing the steam and the soap to pry my eyes open when I thought I saw the hot water handle of the shower move. Now fully awake, I glared through the dim light of the morning and the steam of the

shower in astonishment as a two foot water snake mockingly licked his tongue in my direction.

Jumping over the shower curtain, not through it, I bounded through the house, naked as a new-born fawn, trying to find something with which to go hand-to-fang combat with the serpent. The only thing that was within reach was a handsaw, and I soon had the snake subdued partly due to the fact it was too busy laughing at this 250 pound naked man whacking at him, the shower curtain, and the bathtub with a handsaw. Soon the battle was over, but I don't believe I really killed the beast. I believe it died of mirth.

Shaken but not swayed, I chalked it up to another freak of nature and thought something that strange could never happen again. Wrong! Not many days later, I heard something going through my trash in the kitchen. Thinking I had another rat, I strolled into the kitchen to see a five foot black snake lazily pilfering through my trash like a wino looking for his next meal.

Here let me say that I love Mother Nature. I believe in the fair chase of the hunt and in giving all creatures a fighting chance in the field, whether it be a whitetail deer or a rabbit. I consider myself a modern sportsman and, as one, I have a duty to protect and defend wildlife from all of the lazy poachers that choose to shoot animals that have a distinct disadvantage. But I am not ashamed to say I shot that snake. And I am not ashamed to say I shot or otherwise somehow unfairly killed every one of his hundred or so aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and ex-wives that appeared in my cabin over the next three months. And appear they did.

Snakes came from everywhere and every part of the house. They came from the chimney, from under the couch, and from under the T.V. Snakes were in my cabinets, on my refrigerator, and on the hearth of my fireplace. Snake couples went on dates

through the shag carpet in my living room and gave birth to their babies behind my kitchen stove.

I have never been really fond of snakes to begin with. For one thing their little beady eyes have always reminded me of my Uncle Roy, and like Uncle Roy, they always look as if they are getting ready to hit you up for money. The other reason I never really liked snakes is that little Garden of Eden incident. Who can ever forget that one. But before they invaded my house, I had accepted them as part of nature. I never went out of my way to harm them, but I never hesitated to smile a little when I saw one laying dead in the middle of the highway either.

I guess all things must end, even nightmares, and I knew the end had come to my life in my dream house when on a quiet summer evening I walked into the kitchen to see a four foot black snake wrapped around my microwave as if waiting for me to pop a bag of popcorn so I could share. I had taken all I could take, and I sat down at my kitchen table and cried. I was moving. I didn't care if I had to live in a lean-to under a pine tree for the rest of my life, I was moving out of that cabin.

Within days I had bought another house and sold the cabin to a retired couple who wanted the cabin as a vacation home. And I admit, I at first felt bad about selling the house to them. They were old and frail, and if the house had destroyed me, a modern man of the world, what would it do to them? At this writing it has been one year since they purchased the house, and I have

heard no complaints. They love the place and say they cannot believe I sold it so cheaply. To that, I can only groan.

A few weeks after moving out, I discovered why I had so many snakes in the house—the de-rodent device. The snakes were attracted by the vibrations of the device. A snake relies heavily on vibrations and heat to find prey and that little device was attracting them like a squirrel to a nut you might say.

Today I live in a brick home overlooking a bubbly brook with mountains towering majestically overhead. To date, I have only seen one snake, a puny and wretched little creature who was obviously confused and lost and only wanted direction to the nearest backyard. I have seen no rats, no cockroaches, no squirrels, no bears, no bees, and only a few mice. The mice seem to have an appetite for green pellet-shaped poison, and they cause few problems.

My greatest problem now is whether the barn owl which wakes me up each morning will hoot at 5:00 or 5:25. Sometimes he is not himself and is a little late. I hope he straightens up soon. I would hate to take drastic actions. Δ

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Make “split pulley” bookends

By Dana Martin Batory

After years of hunting for flat belt pulleys at auctions, flea markets, etc. I finally located some at a garage out in the country. The fellow was selling them at 25 cents each regardless of size. Needless to say, I bought all of them. It was indeed my lucky day. Besides those he also had two flat belt split cone pulleys (7/6/5/4/) 8-inches long with 1⁵/₈-inch bores at \$1.50 each.

The rock maple split pulleys were in terrible condition—probably over 75 years old, heavily used and abused, poorly stored, and had spent the last three days setting out in weather that varied between a downpour and a blazing sun. Even so, I purchased them as examples to illustrate how early industry finally eliminated the headache of having to completely dismantle line shafts and their pulleys to make changes or repairs.

More than one old-timer has written of putting everything back and then discovering a leftover or misplaced pulley which meant everything came down again. The split pulleys, however, could simply be placed around the shaft and bolted into position in a mat-

ter of minutes saving hours, if not days, in downtime.

The pulleys were almost artistic in design and too attractive to just store on a shelf. After some careful regluing and cleaning with 0000 steel wool and paste wax, I recycled them into bookends.

Naturally I did it in such a way that they were completely unharmed and unaltered. Always follow the adage: “Never do to an antique what can’t be easily undone later.”

The plans are meant only as a guide. Split pulleys come in all sizes and the designs can easily be adapted to the circumstances.

Design number one

Cutting list/materials:

2 hardwood bases: 7½-inches long,
4½-inches wide, ¾-inches tall
1 flat belt split cone pulley



Bookends made with the pulleys split in half

glue. This way, they can always be separated later if need be. Wax the bases. Felt can be glued to the underside of the bases.

Design number two

Cutting list/materials:

2 flat belt split cone pulleys
2 hardwood bases: 9-inches long,
7¾-inches wide, ¾-inches tall
2 hardwood uprights 9-inches long,
7¾-inches wide, ¾-inches tall
2 hardwood shafts 1⁵/₈-inches in
diameter, 9¾-inches long

Instructions:

Cut the bases and uprights to size. Cut the shaft blocks slightly longer than required and turn to the given diameter.

Locate the center of the bases and drill a 1⁵/₈-inch diameter hole for shaft. Cut the shafts to length. Sand and varnish all parts, leaving bare all glue surfaces.

Glue the bases to the uprights. Glue the shaft into place. Separate the pulleys and bolt them securely around the shafts.

The felt can be glued to the underside of the bases. Δ



Bookends made with the pulleys kept intact

Instructions:

Cut bases to length and width. Separate pulley. Center the pulley halves on the bases and lightly trace their outline.

Sand and varnish the bases, leaving bare where the pulleys will rest. Glue the pulley halves to bases with water soluble

Travel cheaply but in style by staying at beautiful hostels

By Jan Palmer

Imagine having a room in a light-house overlooking the Pacific Ocean. A hot tub awaits and later a clean, cozy bed takes away the weariness of driving all day. Imagine paying less than \$10 for this experience.

Or stay in a large log-style home with an equipped kitchen so you can prepare your own meals. A piano sits in the living room near a fireplace where you can curl up with a book or write in a journal. Nestled in towering redwood trees it's hard to believe you're less than an hour from the bustle of San Francisco. What would you expect to pay? \$75 per night? \$50 per night? How does under \$10 sound?

Or travel a bit further and find renovated Victorian cottages with a bed-and-breakfast feel. After an early evening meal you're off to explore the wharf at night where you can hear sea lions argue for choice resting spots. The full moon illuminates the bay—or a few blocks away you can check out an Irish pub, a jazz club, a movie or window shopping. For \$12 per night?

Welcome to hosteling. An Australian engineer visiting on business pondered, "Why do they call it hostels? Everyone is so friendly."

Discounted, safe sleeping areas are only one way to cut travel expenses at hostels. Most have a kitchen where you can prepare grocery bought food or food that you brought along. Many also keep on hand basics like coffee, sugar, flour and so forth. You have a chance to meet people from all over the world—most from areas where hosteling is better known than in the U.S. Visit with people from Britain, Australia, South Africa, Korea, Japan and throughout Europe. Talk with

people who may be going to or coming from your destination. If you have room, ask about travellers who may need a ride—most will chip in on gas and cut your expenses for driving.

You're probably thinking 'what's the catch?' Well, there are some rules involved. You'll have to make your own bed and do a small chore—perhaps wipe off the kitchen counter and table, or sweep the bathroom or tidy the living room. Because of the cost,



most hostels are volunteer run so you won't get room service and pressed sheets. With several people doing 10-15 minute chores it adds up to several hours of cleaning daily—so most hostels are very clean. You will probably share a room with several other people in bunk bed style, usually 4-6 to a room. There are usually curfew hours when the hostel doors are locked—which vary from 10 p.m. to midnight, and often you must be out in the morning from 8-10 a.m. (Most give a wake up call an hour or two before). Some take credit cards, but more commonly you'll need cash or travellers checks.

Generally the people hosteling are pretty respectable. Drugs, alcohol and tobacco are not allowed (some allow smoking outside the building). Imagine having conversations about growing grapes or making cheese with

French visitors, agriculture endeavors in England, gardening in Australia and any number of cultural discussions and comparisons. It is a chance to share a little of the home-grown attitude with others. Some may be very different—you may meet 19 year olds who have never before been out of Los Angeles, or strict vegetarians who oppose use of animals for food. Can you deal with people disagreeing with you? On the other hand, many will be interested in hearing about your lifestyle. I've found goats gather conversation from residents of Britain, France, Canada and many other places. Most are genuinely interested.

Most hostels are wheelchair accessible but be sure and ask before you go if that is needed. Most do not allow pets and there are varying parking regulations depending on location. Reservations are paid in some cases as much as two weeks in advance. Memberships in the American Youth Hostels International (733 15th St. NW, Ste 840, Washington DC 20005) are \$25—it saves the \$2-3 a night non-member fee to have a card. Despite the name, hosteling is open to people of all ages, from children to seniors. They vary from restored lighthouses to an old jail and nearly everything in between. Some people have home hostels. Most run from \$7.50 to \$12 per night per person. Like motels, some are better, and friendlier, than others. Children usually are given a cheaper rate. There are more hostels available on the coasts but most bigger cities have a hostel available. If you plan on staying at hostels, bring a sheet, sleeping blanket, and towel to save the small rental charge (which pays for cleaning sheets and towels) at the hostel.

For travelling on a budget, hostels are a great way to cut costs and learn about other countries, cultures and ideas - and a way to share small farm ideas with people who may only see American cities. Consider hosteling for your next trip. Δ

Tony Reitz — not just a chimney sweep

By Gene Sheley

In recent years, wood-fueled heating has become almost as technically advanced as electronics, a change brought about to meet environmental standards and increase stove efficiency. But even the best systems need regular professional care, and that calls for a professional that has evolved from the sooty chimney sweep to the home heating technician.

Although the name has been retained with pride, today's chimney sweeps are responsible for more than just removing soot and clinkers. The "sweep" is often the first line of defense against fires associated with wood-burning heat sources, as they are well trained in fireplace and stove operation safety and wood-heat efficiency.

In 1980, Tony Reitz, a timber faller in the forested areas of extreme northern California, joined this cadre of historic technicians under the name of "Holy Smoke." Raised in Santa Barbara, California, he sought a lifestyle and a career away from that growing metropolis. While living in the northern California woods, the chimney sweep business aroused his interest, and after a brief apprenticeship with Jonathan Lucky of southern Oregon, he went into the business by himself.

Now he is settled down in his backwoods home on the Klamath River area, raising four children and operating his own one-man business as one of the few certified chimney sweeps currently operating along the California-Oregon border area.

He is certified by the Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild and the Chimney Safety Institute of America. Although chimney cleaning remains his primary effort, Reitz expanded into the associated business of wood

heating consultation and sales of stoves. He also does a lot of fireplace and chimney repair, as a state-licensed contractor, during the warmer months, while having a little time for his family during the better weather months of the year.

Reitz hadn't really planned on being a consultant and merchant.

"When I was just sweeping, people kept asking me what kind of stove and size they should have. The answer always was the "Lopi" brand, and he began analyzing the size and style of stove for chimney cleaning customers.

"I thought, this is dumb. Why should I be making recommendations for someone else. Then I contacted Lopi and I set up as a dealer."

His work during the fall can be described only as "intense," and Reitz would like to see the cleaning business spread out through the year.

However, "People procrastinate about having their chimneys cleaned. They wait until they need the fireplace before they think about having it cleaned. I'm usually booked weeks in advance during the winter."

The heating system sales effort is more or less self-run, with a colorful display set up in a small mall in Yreka, California. The display area is stocked with a selection of stoves, literature and information on how to contact Reitz.

"My salesroom is the customer's home," he said. "It doesn't do any good to talk about what a customer needs in the showroom, noting that the specific home must be measured, the existing facilities considered, and the needed heat volume and type of stove calculated.

Initial certification by the guild isn't the end of his proof of skill. "Every three years I have to be re-certified by the guild," said Reitz.

Initially, he wore a top hat and tails which was the traditional garb of long-ago chimney sweeps, but now he wears work clothes of the more conventional type. That doesn't prevent him from displaying the humor also associated with the chimney sweeps of old.

"I'm always looking for the gold that is supposed to be hidden in the smoke shelves of fireplaces," he says. "So far I haven't had any luck."

Although he won't admit to seeing a little chubby man in a red suit, he "finds" a sooty red rag in a fireplace and shows it to the customer's small children.

Reitz maintains this sense of humor in spite of the "extremely" dirty work and the dangers. While he hasn't seriously injured himself in falls, an errant nail two years ago destroyed the vision in his left eye. "It (the eye loss) doesn't interfere with my work but I have a certain amount of depth perception problems."

He says he also encounters hazards for the homeowners, often finding homes "with sheetrock and other structural stuff so badly charred, I'm surprised the house hasn't gone up in flames."

Aside from the stove display, Reitz' truck is his office, shop, and tool storage. A variety of steel-bristle brushes along with rigid and bendable extensions, are the primary tools of his trade.

Critical to his reputation for neatness is a high efficiency vacuum cleaner.

With his brushes, he cleans from three to five chimneys in a day, and the large area he covers often requires more driving time than cleaning time. He's booked three weeks in advance this time of the year, which, he says, demonstrates how many people procrastinate. Δ

THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a new feature in *Backwoods Home Magazine*. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to *BHM*, P.O. Box 40, Montague, CA 96064. There is no payment for jokes used.)

Newt Gingrich, Al Gore, and Bill Clinton go to Oz. Gingrich asks for a heart, Gore asks for a brain, what does Clinton ask for?

Answer: Dorothy

In some foreign country a priest, a lawyer, and an engineer are about to be guillotined. The priest puts his head on the block, they pull the rope, and nothing happens. He declares that he's been saved by divine intervention, so he's let go. The lawyer is put on the block, and again the rope doesn't release the blade. He claims he can't be executed twice for the same crime, and he is set free too. They grab the engineer and shove his head into the guillotine. He looks up at the release mechanism and says, "Wait a minute, I see your problem..."

A man is on his way home from work one afternoon in LA and he's stopped in traffic and thinks, "Wow, this traffic seems worse than usual; we're not even moving."

He notices a police officer walking down the highway in between the cars and he rolls down his window and says, "Excuse me officer, what's the hold up?"

"O.J. just found out the verdict, he's all depressed. He's lying down in the middle of the highway and he's threatening to douse himself in gasoline and light himself on fire. He just doesn't have \$8.5 million dollars for the Goldmans. I'm walking around taking up a collection for him."

The man says, "Oh really, how much have you got so far."

"So far....10 gallons."

Brace yourself, Mr. Jones," the physician told the patient on whom he had performed a battery of costly tests. "You have approximately six months to live."

"But I don't have insurance, doctor," said Cassidy, "and I can't skimp and save enough to pay you in that time!"

"All right, all right," soothed the medical man. "Let's say nine months, then."

A cynical Hollywood agent was interviewing candidates for upcoming acts. The first man entered his office and the agent asked, "What do you do?"

The man sat down, positioned a dummy on his lap, and the dummy began to speak.

"Get out," the agent said. "No one's interested in ventriloquists anymore. Besides, I can see your lips moving."

A second man came in and the agent asked, "What do you do?"

The man waved his arms over the agent's desk and articles on it began to disappear.

"Get out," the agent said. "No one cares about magicians. Besides, I can see you putting things up your sleeves."

A third man came in and the agent asked, "What do you do?"

The man waved his arms and suddenly started to rise from the floor. Soon he was hovering near the ceiling, then he was flying around the room. Next, he flew out an open window despite the fact they were on the seventeenth floor. Then he flew back in and landed in front of the agent's desk.

The agent looked at him and asked, "Is that all you do—bird imitations?"

Two ferocious cannibal chiefs sat licking their fingers after a large meal. "Your wife makes a delicious roast," one chief said.

"Thanks," his friend said. "But I'm sure gonna miss her."

BUMPER STICKERS

— I don't suffer from insanity, I enjoy every minute of it.

— I want to die in my sleep like my grandfather, not yelling and screaming like the passengers in his car.

— Earth first! We'll strip mine the other planets later.

— So many idiots, so few comets.

— The gene pool needs more chlorine.

— Jesus is coming! Quick, look busy!

— Guns don't kill people, postal workers do.

— Friends help you move. GOOD friends help you move bodies.

Save big \$\$\$ by installing your own septic system

By Rev. Dr. J. D. Hooker

There are several things involved in back country living that simply demand a degree of independence and self-sufficiency. As far as home, farm, or ranch sewage treatment goes, there are normally only two realistic possibilities. The first is the simple, "old fashioned" outhouse, which really isn't such a bad option at that, if your needs are simple enough.

Your other option is to install a standard septic system. If your water requirements are relatively high, possibly including a washing machine, several family members who need to bathe or shower daily (really a requirement when you're all working hard), plenty of dishes to wash, and so forth, then in most cases installing a septic system is the best way to go.

Before you start

In just about every case, the very best place to go looking for advice, before starting, would be your County or State Board of Health. These folks will know more about what is actually needed for your particular soil types, water tables, and other variables, than anyone else. Usually, they'll not only tell you how to meet the minimum legal requirements, but give you their own experienced recommendations as well. I've even found that most of these officers are more than happy to sit down and help you custom design a system for whatever situation you happen to be in.

You might consider shaving some corners here and there, but I'd recommend sticking just as close to their guidelines as possible. After all, it's your property we're talking about and you sure don't need sewage problems and pollution mucking up your slice of the country.

Putting in your septic system yourself is a lot of hard work, but there isn't any way around that. But doing all of this work yourself, rather than paying a contractor, can easily slice two thirds or more off the cost of your system. That's a big chunk of change by anyone's standards.

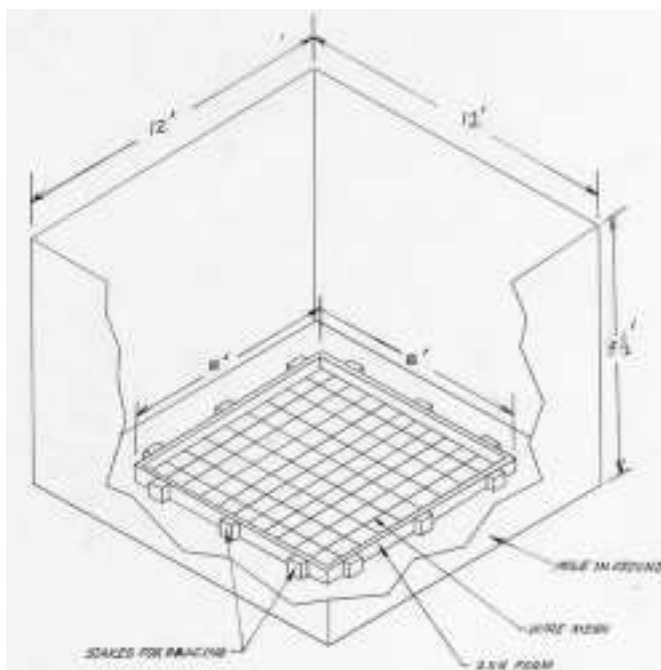
Often, if you'll look around before getting started, you can wind up with even bigger savings, often cutting out quite a bit of the hardest labor as well. When it came time to put in our own septic system, I figured I'd need to rent a backhoe for the job. Our soil is plenty rich enough that you could grow just about anything, but it's also so heavy that it's actually tough to plow, let alone shovel. About that exact same time though, my friend Art needed a big concrete floor poured for his new pole barn.

Aside from farming, Art makes the rest of his living operating his own backhoe service. Smaller concrete jobs, like sidewalks and stuff, he'll tackle himself, but this was a lot more than he could handle. I'm plenty good at concrete, but didn't have a backhoe available unless I rented one. So we very quickly agreed to a trade. Even though neither of us actually ended up putting in more than one long day's work each, we both ended up being pleased with the arrangement. To this day, I'm still convinced that we both came out real money ahead on the deal.

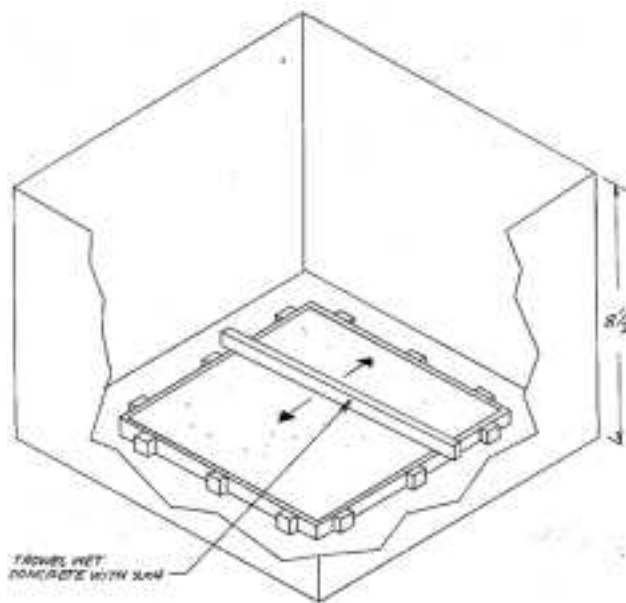
So it's important to check into any cost-cutting options you might have available before you start pouring your own cash and sweat into the project.

While most septic tank makers will include delivering the tank right into the hole (which is the route I went), I've know plenty of people who increased their savings even further by building their own tank right in place. This increases your work load something like 200% or 300%, but if your funds start running a little short, this offers another way to save money.

Even if your original plans call for installing a purchased tank, it's worth discussing the size requirements, etc., with your local health or building department. Then you can sit down with paper and pencil and decide for yourself if the extra savings would be worth the extra labor. You'll just need to take your personal finances, skills, time restraints, and other circumstances into considerations to make this decision.



Dig the hole and prepare the bottom to receive concrete.



Pour the concrete in the bottom and level it.

Starting construction

Should you wind up deciding to build your own septic tank, and unless your local regulations dictate otherwise, a simple square tank, measuring 8-feet long, by 8-feet wide by 6-feet deep, will normally meet all of the needs of an average rural family. To do this you'll need to dig a hole roughly 12- by 12-feet and about 8½-feet deep (which is pretty much what you'd need to dig for a pre-fab tank anyway). Use 2x4s or other lumber to form up an 8- by 8-foot floor area right in the center of this hole.

You'll need to use some sort of steel reinforcing in this floor, but you could save a couple more bucks by using any sort of metal fencing instead of purchasing regular concrete reinforcing mesh.

You'll also need a straight 2x4 at least 8½-feet long to use to level off the concrete inside these forms. Pour these forms full to the top with concrete, then using a sawing motion, pull this 2" x 4" along the top of the forms, to strike the concrete off level. There really isn't any reason at all to finish this floor any smoother, as once the walls and top of the tank are completed, it will never be seen again.

Next you'll need to build six-foot high walls resting on the edges of your floor. You can build or rent wooden forms if you'd prefer to pour concrete walls. But, unless you've already got some experience at this, I'd build the walls from block or brick. Using blocks will take just a little longer than pouring concrete, but the cost is right about the same while laying block is much safer in case you'd made some minor mistake.

You'll need to install a PVC coupling in the tank wall nearest to your dwelling, to allow a four-inch drain pipe to let liquid flow into the tank. Place this approximately four to six inches below the top of the wall and roughly centered. On the opposite wall you'll also need to install a similar coupling just slightly lower to allow the effluent to flow out.

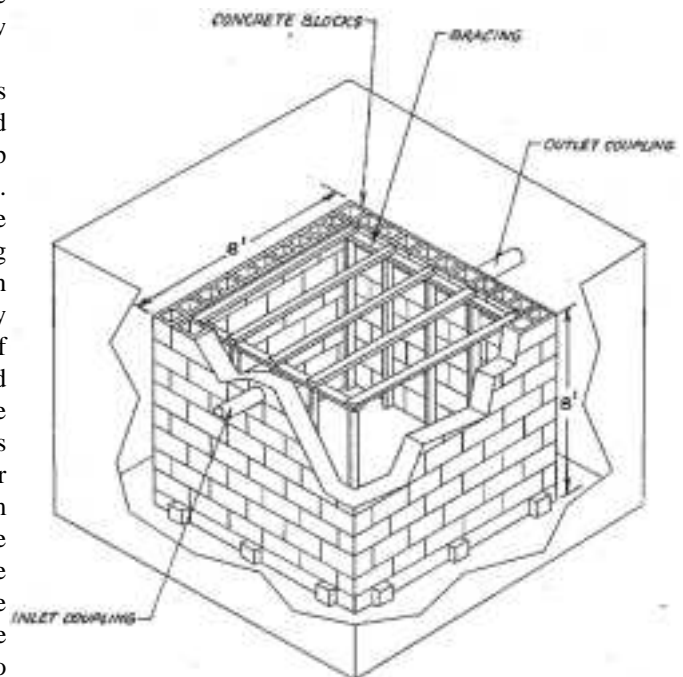
Once the walls are up, you'll need to form up the top lid for the tank. This is best done by fashioning braces, and then resting two 45- by 90-inch sheets of ¾-inch plywood atop the whole structure, as shown. Remember to include the form work for the access hole. Use hardened concrete nails to fasten the 2x8-edge forms to the wall, and run at least a few braces

from these forms to the back of the hole. Pour your concrete and, as the illustration shows, you'll need to pour a reinforced concrete lid to place over the access hole separately.

Let all this cure for a couple of days, then remove the edge forms, cut out the plywood under the access hole, then climb inside and remove all of the bracing. Once you've placed the cover over the access hole, your tank is finished. Very often, though, you'll find that by now surface water, shallow ground water, or maybe both, will be seeping into the hole. If that is the case, you'll need to pump your tank full of water as soon as possible to prevent it from floating up.

Running the pipes

You can run regular schedule 40 PVC pipe (or iron or clay if you'd prefer or have it handy) from your home's sewer system to the tank's inlet. To keep from repeatedly sloshing up the effluent working inside of the tank, you need to really try to keep the drop in the sewer line running into the tank between 1 inch per 10 feet and 2 inches per 10 feet.



Build the sides and install the framing.

The leach field

Now for the overflow side. This requires digging numerous trenches, each about three-feet wide and three-feet deep, and at least four-feet apart. The number and length of trenches you'll require depends on your soil type as well as other considerations. Again, the best place to go for advice is your local Board of Health or Building Department. In most areas, a layout like the one illustrated will meet the needs of a family of four to six people.

Keep the bottoms of the trenches as level as possible as you go.

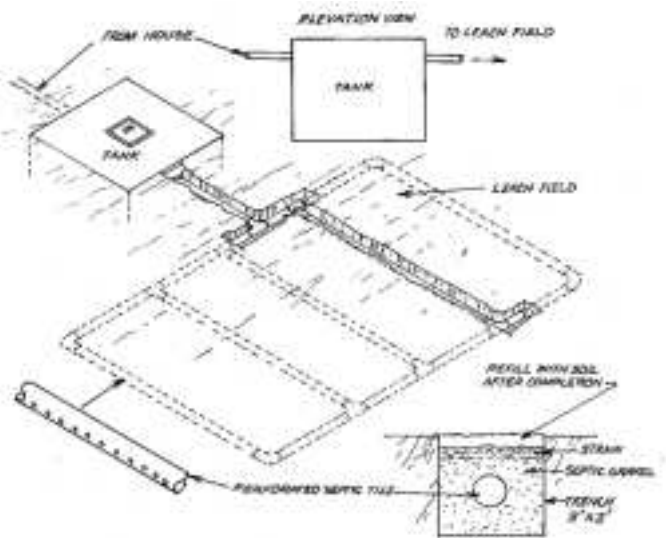
Twelve inches of "septic stone," which is a specific size of gravel available from probably every gravel pit in the country, goes in the bottom of each trench. Next you'll need enough perforated septic tile, along with Ts, elbows and other fittings to place in the center of these trenches. This is where you'll need to work with a lot of care. You have to have "fall" from the tank to the far end of this leach tile. But too little fall and the near portions of the tile will start to plug up in only a few years; too much and the farther portions will plug up

instead. You have to maintain an even and steady 1 inch per 10 feet of fall throughout the system to prevent problems.

If an inspection is required in your area, this is the point where you'll usually want to call for one. After that, another 12 inches of septic stone is used to cover the tile. If all of this sounds like a lot of gravel, it is. We had to use 200 tons of septic stone for our system. Good thing gravel's cheap around here.

You'll need to cover this second layer of stone with either a layer of building paper or about eight inches of straw. This keeps dirt from settling into your gravel and clogging the system.

Finish by filling everything back in with dirt, finding some sort of use for all of the leftover dirt, and spreading some grass seed over the whole area. You'd never want to build or plant trees or shrubs over your septic area. But, once some grass starts filling in, it will usually grow extremely well. So this does make sort of a nice little sort of mini-pasture for a couple of pygmy goats or other small grazing animals if you want to keep from having to mow it all the time.

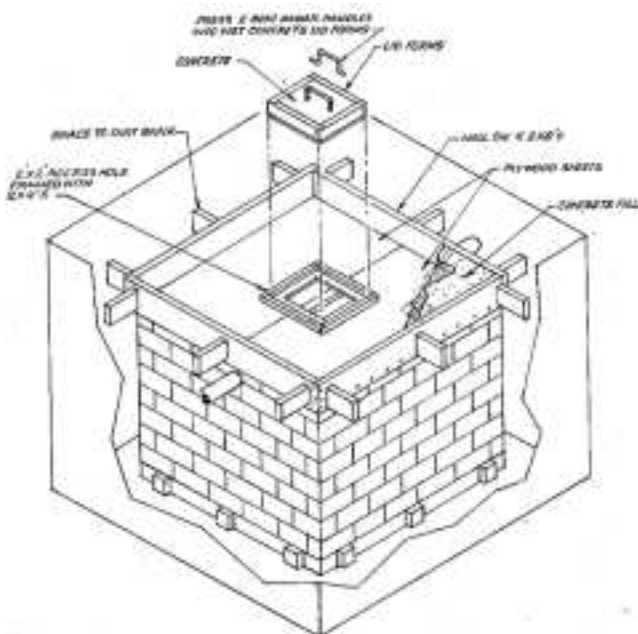


Lay in the leach field.

Just so you'll know, every Board of Health Officer or employee I've ever asked made a point of telling me that all of those septic starters, septic system helpers, and other products that add bacteria to your tank and system are both unnecessary and a waste of money. They don't hurt anything should you insist on using them, but they don't add anything that isn't already there. They're sort of like taking money and flushing it down your toilet. But it's your money, so flush if you want to. But not me.

That's pretty much how to install your own septic system. It is an awful lot of work but you should try looking at it this way: if you need a septic system, then somebody has to do the work anyway, so would you rather pay someone else or yourself? The savings you can realize installing your own system can equal a mighty fat paycheck that you might prefer to keep yourself and, once you've completed the job, you'll not only have the satisfaction that comes from saving so large a handful of green paper, but of having completed a major undertaking that you can see working perfectly for many years to come.

This really is a situation where a job well done is its own reward. Δ



Complete the tank and install the access hole.

Try tempeh as a protein substitute

By Jennifer Stein Barker

Tempeh is a protein source that many Americans are unfamiliar with, even vegetarians who eat soy products as a regular part of their diet. Tempeh has been a favorite food in Indonesia for several hundred years, but was not widely available in the US until the 1970s. Now you may find it in the freezer in a health-food store, or the health-food section of your grocery store.

What is tempeh?

Tempeh is a cultured food, like yogurt, made by the inoculation of partially cooked soybeans with a friendly bacteria (*Rhizopus oligosporus*). The beans are then spread out in sheets about 1/2" thick and incubated for 28 to 32 hours. By then the culture has knitted the beans together into a dense, cohesive cake. It is packaged up and stored frozen or chilled. Fresh or defrosted tempeh will keep 3 to 4 days at 40 degrees. I usually keep it in the freezer and defrost it just before using.

How to use tempeh

Tempeh must be thoroughly cooked before, or during, inclusion into a dish. If you are using tempeh in a cold dish, like a salad or spread, you must simmer, steam, or fry it first and then chill it for use.

Tempeh may be diced, grated, or served as is in patty form. My favorite method is to cut it in strips about 1/4" wide, and then cut again on the diagonal, so that I have a diamond-shaped dice. The thin edges allow the tempeh to soak up the seasonings I use in cooking. Tempeh by itself has a rather bland flavor, which has been described as "mushroom" and "nutty". I find it pleasant, but I also find that it benefits from the addition of spices and herbs.

Nutrition from soy

Soybeans have been called "gold from the earth". Twenty times more protein can be produced from an acre of land used to produce soybeans than from the same acre used to graze cattle. Tempeh contains complete protein, of the same quality as that found in meat. It has no cholesterol, and very little sodium. Tempeh is a good source of iron, vitamin E, and lecithin. It also may contain vitamin B12, produced by the bacteria which grow along with the culture (but not reliably enough to be a good source of the vitamin).

As a primary protein source, or as the addition to a good and varied diet, tempeh is an excellent source of nutrition.

Tempeh stew

This is a wonderful vegetarian stew with a savory miso gravy. Serves 2-3:

2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1 medium onion
1 8 oz. cake of soy or grain tempeh
2 cups water
2 carrots, diced
2 large potatoes, diced
1-2 turnips, diced
1 tsp. prepared mustard
2 Tbsp. miso
1/4 tsp. rosemary
1/2 tsp. thyme
1/2 tsp. marjoram
1/2 tsp. sage
1 Tbsp. arrowroot or 2 Tbsp. flour

Method:

In a 3 quart or larger stockpot or Dutch oven, warm the olive oil on medium heat and saute the onion until it is translucent. Add the tempeh and garlic, and stir-fry briefly.

Now add the water and the diced carrots, potatoes, and turnip. Stir them together and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes after everything comes to the boil (if you dice the vegetables smaller, they will cook quicker).

Stir in the mustard, miso, and herbs. Simmer for about 10 minutes more. Dissolve the arrowroot or flour in 1/4 cup of water and add it to the casserole, stirring well. Simmer about 5 minutes more, until thick, stirring frequently.

Wild mushroom gravy with tempeh

A dense, savory gravy for any occasion. Serve it over toast or mashed potatoes, with a heap of vegetables on the side.

1-8 oz. cake of soy or multi-grain tempeh
1/2 ounce dried wild mushrooms (such as boletus or morel)
3 cups stock or water

2 Tbsp. miso
¼ cup tamari
¼ cup cornstarch
¼ cup fine whole wheat flour

Method:

In a saucepan, cover the tempeh with some of the stock or water and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Drain the water off the tempeh onto the mushrooms, and add enough more warm stock or water to make sure the mushrooms are covered. Let them soak while you dice the tempeh and set aside.

Drain the mushrooms, reserving the soaking water (if you are using purchased dried mushrooms, you may at this point need to wash the mushrooms carefully and strain any dirt out of the soaking water). Chop the mushrooms finely.

Measure the soaking water into a saucepan, and add enough more stock or water to make 3 cups. Add the miso, tamari, cornstarch, and flour, and whisk together well. Heat to boiling, whisking constantly. Lower the heat and simmer for a few minutes, still whisking constantly, until thick. Add the diced tempeh. Serve over toast, potatoes, stuffing, or rice.



Method:

Cook the brown rice as directed on package.

Get out a large, deep, heavy skillet. Heat the oil over a medium burner, and saute the onion until it begins to turn transparent (adding a little water as necessary to keep from sticking). Add the garlic, ginger, and diced tempeh. Saute for 3 more minutes, stirring as necessary to keep from sticking.

Add the dried stock or water, hot pepper, potatoes, grated turnip, sliced carrot, and orange peel. Cover and simmer for about 20 minutes (until the vegetables are tender). Put the vinegar, sherry, tamari, honey, cornstarch, and hot sauce in a cup. Whisk to blend well, and set ready near your stove.

When the vegetables are tender, add the sauce and the spinach at the same time. Cook, stirring, just until the sauce thickens and the spinach

wilts. Serve immediately over steamed rice.

Stir-fried tempeh and vegetables

This is basic fare around our house when the veggies roll out of the garden, or in winter with root-cellar vegetables. Serves two:

1 cup raw brown rice, cooked according to directions
1 Tbsp. peanut or sesame oil
1 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot
2 or 3 cloves garlic, minced
4 oz. (½ cake) soy or wild rice tempeh
¼ cup raw cashews
1 small hot pepper, finely minced
a heap of vegetables, however much you think you'll eat (suggestions: winter: two carrots, a white turnip, and ½ head savoy cabbage; summer: baby carrots, baby zucchinis, and a big bunch of greens)

Method:

Chop or slice all your vegetables and divide them into long-cooking ones and quick-cooking ones. Dice the tempeh into small diamond-shaped pieces (or however you like). Heat your wok or skillet over medium-high, and add the oil, garlic, and ginger. Stir-fry briefly, then add the tempeh, cashews, and hot pepper. Stir-fry for a minute or two until the tempeh and cashews begin to turn golden.

Add the long-cooking vegetables along with a little water, cover, and allow to steam, covered, for a few minutes. When the vegetables are just beginning to be tender, add the quick-cooking vegetables and steam or stir-fry until done. Serve over the cooked rice, with tamari on the side. Δ

Indonesian spicy tempeh

Garden vegetables in a pungent sauce. There are quite a few ingredients in this, but it's really very simple. Serves 4:

1¾ cups raw brown rice, cooked
2 Tbsp. peanut oil
1 cup diced onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot
1-10 oz. cake Indonesian-style tempeh, diced
1 cup stock or water
1 dried hot pepper
2 potatoes, diced
1 small turnip, grated
1 medium carrot, halved and sliced
1 tsp. dried orange peel, or 2 tsp. fresh
3 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
2 Tbsp. sherry
¼ cup tamari
2 Tbsp. honey
1 Tbsp. cornstarch
dash hot sauce, to taste
1 bunch spinach, washed and shredded, 1-inch pieces

Have gourmet fare foraging wild spring greens

By Robert K. Henderson

I gnaw dried, canned and cellared food all winter long, and since you're reading this there's a good chance you do, too. So you know what I mean when I say that by February there isn't much I wouldn't do for fresh greens. Fortunately, succulent wild shoots are only weeks away. You too can savor gourmet greens before the garden has even been planted, if you're open to a wild idea or two.

For my money, the surest cure for the root cellar blues is a meal of tender, steamy knotweed shoots. This works out well, because I don't actually have any money and the shoots are free. Two edible knotweed species grow across the US. Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) and giant knotweed (*P. sachalinense*) both have large, heart-shaped leaves and jointed, bamboo-like stems, which is why some call it Mexican bamboo.

The canes grow in dense thickets eight to twelve feet high. If you don't already have a patch in mind, look for leafless stands of "bamboo" along winter roadsides.

Knotweed punches through the dead leaves about mid-March here in western Washington. The shoots resemble fat, pale asparagus, but don't taste like it. Like genuine bamboo, knotweed fairly jumps out of the ground, growing up to several inches a day. A stand at peak production is virtually impossible to overharvest. I cut shoots by the dozen without making a dent in my patch.



Young dock leaves

Shoots between two and six inches high are perfect for the table. The slime that oozes out of cut knotweed renders it unpalatable raw, but cooking eliminates this slime, leaving a tangy, meltingly tender vegetable that's a real tonic after months of squash. Try simmering knotweed shoots in water, stock or wine, with a little garlic and onion. Or chill cooked shoots and serve

on toast with a cream sauce. For sheer elegance, however, nothing beats velouté d'asperges japonaises, or Japanese asparagus soup. (Guests love my "Japanese asparagus." Sadly, gourmet greengrocers can't seem to find any for them. Ahem.)

Knotweed tastes something like rhubarb, and can substitute for rhubarb in pie and jam recipes. Peel and slice one- to two-foot shoots for sweet dishes. I relish knotweed sauce on toast and pancakes and in filled cookies.

Spinach-like dock

While you're gathering knotweed, be on the lookout for young dock, which often grows nearby. Dock is a very common garden and barnyard weed and is high in iron and vitamins lacking in many backwoods winter diets. Curly, red, yellow and patience dock are but a few of the many varieties of this ubiquitous plant. All are species of genus *Rumex*. The leaves of most are narrow or oval and dark green with a bumpy, orange-peel texture. New foliage sprouts from a



Young dock opening in spring run-off



A knotweed ripe for cutting

ground-level crown and arcs gracefully over the surrounding grass. Later, a central stem appears and may bolt to three feet with a long seed spike at the top. The leaves then grow much larger and often have red or yellow spots. Only young, pre-bolt leaves are mild and tender enough for the table. "Scrolls," pale new leaves that haven't unrolled yet, are the most delicious of all.

Dock looks and tastes like strong, slightly chewy spinach when steamed and eaten with lemon juice or vinegar and butter. A pinch of dill or Parmesan dresses the steamed greens up a bit. Or layer raw young leaves into your favorite lasagna recipe before baking. For a gourmet touch, try stuffing crepes with steamed dock greens and ham.

Two kinds of fiddleheads

Fiddleheads are one of the most well-known wild spring greens, though they come on relatively late in the game. The two edible varieties are very different, so if you don't like one, try the other.

Bracken ferns (*Pteridium aquilinum*) can be located in winter by the lacy brown straw they leave behind when they die. Underground, fat black rhizomes run every which way, ready to send up single green shoots seemingly at random when spring comes. Long, straight stems rocketing into the sunshine are your cue to lift the straw and search for edible sprouts. Collect only curled fiddleheads, because they become stringy and poisonous as they straighten. Bracken sprouts are covered with tiny hairs that feel odd on the tongue. Lightly scrub to remove most of them. Then simmer the fiddleheads in wine vinegar or slice to season stir fry, tomato sauces and rice dishes. Bracken shoots' bitter, almond-like flavor is an acquired taste. Some love it. I use bracken fiddleheads mostly to flavor other dishes.

Lady fern sprouts (genus *Athyrium*) are an entirely different vegetable. These tender, translucent shoots are found in moist woodlands, where they come up in the center of a crown of soft green fronds. Their perfectly-round fiddleheads, reminiscent of old-fashioned lacrosse rackets, gracefully unwind until an entire frond is outstretched. They're truly delectable when still tightly rolled and no more than a few inches high. Extremely tender and mild in flavor, missing the fur of their stronger-tasting cousins, they need only be lightly steamed before serving. Lady fern sprouts come up just in time for fishing season and make a great side dish or stuffing for salmon and trout.



Lady ferns sprouting through forest undergrowth

Velouté d'asperges japonaises

1 lb knotweed shoots (about 16 6-inch shoots, 3/4 inch thick at the base) with any leaves that have opened still attached
1/2 cup sliced onion
4 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1 large clove garlic
1/2 teaspoon dill or caraway
salt and pepper to taste
butter and chives, if desired

Mix all ingredients in a large pot, bring to a boil and lower heat. Simmer until shoots are soft, about 10 minutes. (Or cook in a pressure cooker at 15 lbs for 2 minutes.)

Pour pot contents into a blender and blend until completely smooth. (To avoid scalding yourself, fill the pitcher no more than half-full. Place a folded dishtowel on the lid and hold it down firmly while you turn on the blades.) Velouté should be a bit thinner than split pea soup.

Return soup to pot and reheat briefly.

Serve hot, with a pat of butter in the middle and a sprinkling of chives if desired. Serves 6.

Knotweed sauce

4 cups knotweed stalks, peeled and sliced into ¼ inch thick rings
1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon nutmeg

Stir all ingredients in a saucepan until sugar has absorbed some liquid from the knotweed. Place pan over low heat and simmer until sugar dissolves into a syrup. Continue simmering until knotweed is soft. Sauce may be served immediately or canned for later use. Makes 2 pints.

Crepes stuffed with ham and dock

Crepes: Recipe makes 12 crepes.

¾ cup flour
1 cup milk
1 egg
1 tablespoon melted butter
pinch of salt

Sauce and filling:

1 can mushroom soup
½ cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon cooking sherry
¼ cup water
½ teaspoon soy sauce
black pepper to taste
8 tightly-packed cups fresh young dock leaves
12 thin slices of ham

Mix crepe ingredients thoroughly. Heat a sauté pan or small skillet over medium heat and brush with butter. Drop a spoonful of batter into the middle of the pan, lift and shake until batter is spread evenly and thinly. Place pan back on burner until crepe's edges curl slightly. Invert pan over a warm plate; crepe should drop onto it. (Unlike pancakes, crepes are browned on only one side.)

Make use of throwaway fish with "fish salad a la carp"

By J. Alan Burdick

Here's a way to fix carp, that fish you usually throw back into the lake, so that you can not only eat it, but truly enjoy it.

Eviscerate the carp and clean the inside well. It is not necessary to remove the head, and it is necessary to leave the scales on the fish. "Brine" the fish (head, scales, and all) in a brine made up of 8 cups of water, 8 tablespoons salt, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of ground ginger, and 1 teaspoon of black pepper for 3 hours. Do this in a cool place, like the refriger-

erator so the fish remains fresh. The lemon juice and ginger change the texture and taste of the carp flesh.

Smoke the fish, after the brining, in a smoker of some kind for about 3 hours (this assumes a 5 pound fish). At the end of this the skin, scales, head, and bones are easily separated. The flesh will flake, but beware of small "Y" shaped bones similar to pike bones.

To each cup of flaked meat (which is delicious plain) add 2 tablespoons of mayonnaise, 3 tablespoons of diced onion, and 3 tablespoons of diced sweet pickle. Use as you would tuna salad. Δ

Keep crepes warm while preparing sauce and filling.

Mix mushroom soup, onion, garlic, sherry, water and seasonings in a saucepan and simmer until onions are soft. Add water if sauce is too thick.

Steam dock leaves in a saucepan until limp, and drain.

Lay crepes browned side down. Place a slice of ham on each, spoon some cooked greens on top and ladle on a little sauce. Roll up crepes and place side-by-side on a warm serving platter. Pour remaining sauce over the top.

Stuffed salmon with fern shoots

1 whole salmon, about 4 pounds
½ cup uncooked wild rice
1 ½ cups water
½ cup sliced mushrooms
¼ cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
¼ teaspoon dill

¼ teaspoon black pepper
salt to taste
8 whole lady fern shoots, and/or two bias-sliced bracken shoots
melted butter
lemon juice

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Mix rice and water in a saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Cover, bring briefly to a boil, reduce heat to low and steam until tender, about 40 minutes. Add water if necessary.

When rice is ready, remove from heat and stir in mushrooms, onion, garlic, lemon peel, seasonings and bracken shoots, if used.

Fill salmon with rice mixture. Arrange lady fern shoots on top of the mixture, if used. Sew salmon closed.

Place salmon in a baking dish and brush all over with melted butter. Bake uncovered about 30 minutes, or until fish flakes easily when pierced with a fork beside the dorsal fin. Serves 6. Δ